AUGUST, 1952

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ARGOSY

An
Epic of the Sea
by
NICHOLAS
MONSARRAT
Author of
"The Cruel
Sea"

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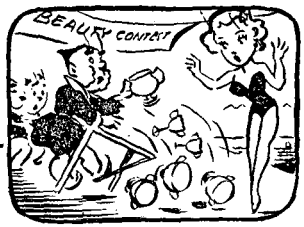

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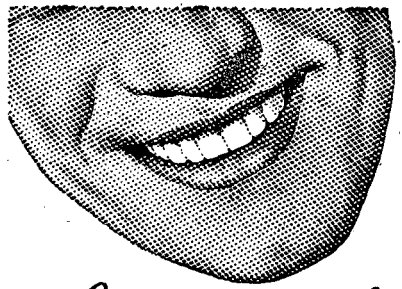

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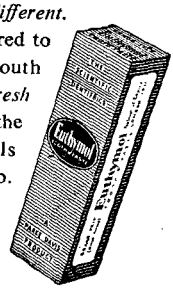

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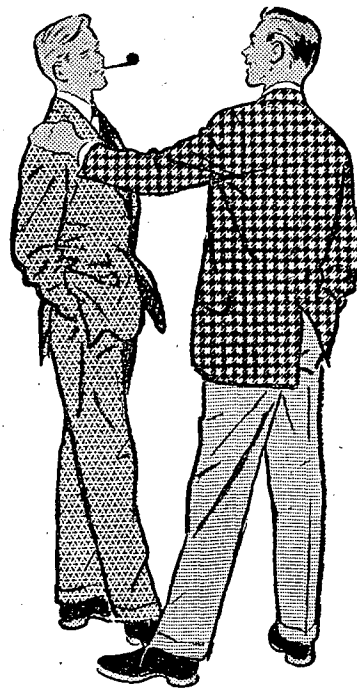

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ARGOSY

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Roundelay

A LARK'S song is the whitening seed of harvests
Winnowed by the sun;
Nightingales remember the cold and empty
Silences of the moon.

Thrushes sing of the storm and the bare branch gashing
An ash-grey sky;
Blackbirds call through the echoing coverts of evening,
Green summer in their cry.

Sparrows cluster, brown husks clogging trees;
And the wren is a fountain;
The robin tells of autumn and the mild
Spode touch of the rain.

Drowsy hens murmur of heat, and drool, and dream
In the dusty sun.
But a cock's cry is the sharpened scimitar
That gathers in the dawn.

MARGARET STANLEY WRENCH

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PRIVATE VIEW

"Married or t'other thing," said Mr. Caunter, "they were happy—happy as the day is long"

by SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

A MILE or so on the hither side of the village of St. Prew, Mrs. Vincent stopped the taxi she had engaged at the railway station, telling the driver that she had an attack of cramp and must walk about a little. She could not give the excuse that she wanted to look at the view—the view of the Cornish cliffs, crested like bulls with shaggy moor and standing sullenly at bay against the Atlantic—for the forgotten, familiar sea fog obscured all but the immediate landscape of rough turf laid thinly over rocky ground, outcrops of granite, an unmortared stone wall laced with brambles and tufted with fern, and the telegraph poles. She walked forward along the road, seeming to carry her landscape with her through the surrounding mist, and looking about for something she could identify.

Thirty years ago, every yard of this road had been as familiar to her as her own hand. She had walked it in all moods, in all weathers, and the last time she had come by it, but in the counter direction, she had seemed almost to fly along it, so great was the force of her anger, her frenzy to escape and never, never set foot on it again.

A stone gatepost came suddenly out of the fog. She thought she remembered that. Laying her bare hand on it, she felt its cold moisture drench into her flesh. A moment later, the sound of the foghorn from the lightship thumped on her hearing. *Hee-haw. Hee-haw*—a descent from the minor seventh to the tonic. She remembered that, all right. She waited for the loud, listless, booming syllables to recur. One counted ten. Subconsciously, she had begun to count, and at ten *Hee-haw*, *Hee-haw* struck in. It was as though she had never been out of earshot, as though the thirty years since her departure had been no more than another way of counting ten.

The sea fog, looking so light as it billowed past, so light and so oddly dry, as though it were smoke, had already begun to penetrate her. Her hand on the gatepost shone with moisture; minute drops bloomed her sleeve. *Eight, nine*—she could not go on—*ten.*

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It was not to be endured. *Hee-haw, Hee-haw.* This time, there was no call to endure it. She turned and walked briskly towards the waiting car, determined to tell the driver that she had changed her mind and was returning to the station. But he said to her, "How's the cramp? Better?" And in the moment of answering him she lost her purpose, got into the car, and let herself be driven on.

The ground began to waver downhill. From here, if it were not for the fog, she would see the roof-tops of the village, the little bay, the scrolling iron-coloured cliffs beyond.

There it would be.

The post office, the bakery, the sheds where the nets were mended and the ground where they were hung to dry, the stone church tower, and the red brick chapel, and the chemist's shop, no wider than a passage, where she used to buy oil of cloves for her toothache. On the outskirts of the village, lying in wait for her, was the bungalow where she had lived for three years with Ludovick. It had been built for a holiday house, flimsy and summerlike—too flimsy even for summer, in this sad seaward climate, so its owner had been glad to close with Ludovick's offer of twenty pounds a year and a new coat of paint.

They had not unpacked before he began laying on his blue paint, dropping paint everywhere and getting painter's colic; a couple of months later, the blue paint was blotching, curling, scaling, and flaking off, for he had used a cheap kind and it could not withstand the heavy charge of salt in the air. But by that time he did not mind. He had begun his first canvas of the series of sea anemones. And on the heels of that, having scorched himself raw with sunbathing, he went down with blood poisoning.

The car slid round a corner and changed gear. She started, and looked out of the window. They were passing the bungalow; she caught a flash of it, perched on its hillock behind the tamarisk hedge. There was a line of washing, so someone was living in it. The fuchsia was gone, and there was a flight of cement-block steps in place of the steep path.

In a whisk, in a glancing blow of recognition, she had seen it again, the place where she had lived for three years—in turmoil, in rapture, in drudgery, in fury, in the bitter patience of disillusionment; there, at the close of those three years, she had had her last quarrel with Ludovick and had walked for the last time down the steep path. Closing the gate, she had heard a sudden, gay clatter of crockery. Ludovick, left to himself, was washing up. He'll soon tire of that, she had thought. Actually, he had stayed on for another six months. Then he had taken himself abroad, and it was from Corsica that he sent her the evidence for their divorce.

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The taxi drew up before The Good Hope. Standing on the pavement, she knew a moment of wincing panic. Because she recognized the narrow street, and the porch of The Good Hope, straddling out across the pavement on its short, clumsy pillars, and even the momentary amplification it gave to the voices of the two women who passed under it, deep in village conversation, she felt herself enclosed by recognitions.

" Proper foolish, I call it," one of the women said. The words seemed to be spoken of her.

Saying to herself, " But I am old, I am well dressed, my eyebrows are plucked, I am called Mrs. Vincent. I have nothing to fear," she entered The Good Hope and was conducted to the bedroom she had booked.

The interior of The Good Hope was considerably changed. It was so spruced, so glistening with white paint, chromium ashtrays, brass warming pans, and pink eiderdowns, that, looking down from her bedroom window into the street, she had the impression that she was in a box at the theatre, looking down on a stage set.

The stage set included a cinema and several newly antiqued teashops, and the stage crowd contained a new social element—people like herself, only younger, walking with a town gait and precision among the fishermen and the slow-footed women.

Looking farther along the street, she noticed a hanging sign that wagged in the perpetual wind and bore the words *Artists' Colours and Materials. Crafts.* Ludovick, the artlessly gratified, the childishly sanguine and childishly downcast, wagging like a spaniel at any pat of recognition—what would he make of this commemoration of his Cornish period, this tribute of pink eiderdowns and warming pans ?

" Hee-haw ! Hee-haw ! " she said, mimicking the foghorn. It was still blaring away, but now, competing with the wireless downstairs and the traffic outside, it was no longer portentous and obsessive, as it had been on the cliff road. It sounded foolishly persevering, like an obstinate donkey tethered on a common. The mood of her journey was dissipated.

Hungry from the sea air, ready to be philosophically entertained, she went down to the lounge and ordered tea.

Above her table, there was a reproduction of the second " Sea Anemones," signed and dated with his painstakingly neat " L. Dodge. July, 1921." How cross everyone had been about it when it was exhibited, and his friendly critics crossest of all, because it had none of the qualities for which they had previously commended him. " A regrettable, if wholly successful, attempt to reproduce the wallpaper in the bedroom of some indulged Edwardian kitchen-

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maid," Boddick had written, and someone else had referred to it as " this jellied Venus rising from pink froth."

Now the reproduction, in a most respectful frame, hung on the wall where formerly old Mr. Tregurtha's head had left its greasy halo, and no one gave it a glance. With every sup of China tea, with every bite of the solicitously Cornish food—saffron buns and vinegar loaf cake—it became easier to sterilize the past by the present. The weather had changed, too. The fog had lifted; the sun was shining. After tea, she would go for a walk.

It was surprisingly creditable (she was sufficiently conscious of the creditability to be surprised) that she could walk about in St. Prew with no more emotion than a Londoner's response to an April evening in country air. She went down to the harbour, where the boats were gently waggling at their moorings. Their shadows plunged into the water that the reflected sunset had strewn with petals of tea-rose pink, and a gull was perched on every mast. She walked on the drying-ground, snuffing up the tar and the brine of the nets. She saw again the bust of Queen Victoria gazing seaward from the bayed front of The Fisherman's Friend, and it was still painted heliotrope.

Fighting resolutely for breath, she climbed the flight of steps that was the short cut to Prospect Terrace, where a half circle of cottages, turning their backs to the sea, had concentrated the regard of their front windows, their lace curtains and aspidistras, on the public urinal. But now the urinal had been replaced by a telephone kiosk, and the cottages had become self-consciously simple, with windows wide open and mugs of daffodils. From here, past pig sties and orchards, a lane had run, joining the main road just short of the bungalow where she and Ludovick had lived. It had a metalled surface now, and a perspective of trim little holiday cottages. She looked at the rise of moorland beyond and turned away. Why should she go walking on for another look at the bungalow? It was still there, for what it was worth. It was still there, and she wasn't. Let that be enough.

So the walk round St. Prew did not take quite so long as Mrs. Vincent had intended, and to fill up the gap of time before dinner she ordered a glass of sherry to be brought to her in the lounge. Automatically, she sat down at the same table where she had had tea. *L. Dodge*, she read. *July*, 1921.

That hot summer—the historically hot summer of 1921. How strange the colours of the parched landscape had been, at once violent and pale, and how strongly everything had smelled: the mown field where they had taken their supper one evening, and everything they ate had tasted of warm stewed figs, because of the

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intense, figlike sweetness of the cut clover, cooked all day in the blazing heat; the gorse along the cliffs, smelling as though a mad baker had been taking coconut bread out of the fiery oven's mouth; the drains in St. Prew; and in the bungalow, the smell of oil paint and of paraffin and of the sea. *L. Dodge. July*, 1921.

"Everyone is struck by that picture," the waiter said, calling her attention to the glass of sherry he had set down. "It was painted here, in St. Prew. 'Sea Anemones,' by Ludovick Dodge. Of course, this is only a copy. The original is in a London gallery, I believe. Bought for the nation."

"Yes. I have seen it," she said.

"Have you, now? Well, it was painted down here, in St. Prew. He lived here for several years. Put St. Prew on the map, you might say. People have been coming to see the place ever since. Of course, it was all a long time ago. Nineteen twenty-one."

"Before you can remember," she said.

"Well, in a manner of speaking, yes. But there's plenty that do. There's old Mr. Caunter—he can tell you any amount about the artist. He's got quite a name for it among our visitors. He's in the bar at this moment."

She made a movement of dissent, but it was too late.

"He's a dear old soul, too," continued the waiter. "A real character. I'll tell you what, I'll ask him to step into the lounge. There's nothing he likes better than telling our visitors about Ludovick Dodge. Another sherry, Madam?"

"Yes."

"Yes, Madam. And I'll bring along Mr. Caunter. He—well, he usually takes rum."

"Then bring a rum with my sherry. Make it a double."

Caunter, she said to herself. Caunter. Who was called Caunter? But a taproom bore by any other name would recognize me as easily. I've been a fool. Take warning by me, ye maidens all. 'Twas Caunter, Caunter, proved my downfall.

The huge old man, coming into the room like a ship, and piloted by the waiter, did not appear to recognize her, nor did she recognize him. He bowed portentously and sat down, and raised his glass.

"Good health to 'ee, my dear," he said. "And welcome to St. Prew. I understand from Marky, here, that you come from London." She nodded. "Yes. And, what's more, that you've seen this picture, here—only it was the real one, and not a printed-off affair—in London. So've *I* seen it. Not in London, though. No, here in St. Prew. Split-new it was then—oh, and a wonder! 'Twasn't everyone liked it from the first. But I did."

Were you the man who came to mend the roof, she thought?

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"Because I liked the man, d'you see? Mr. Dodge. Young man, he was then. In his twenties, I reckon. Remarkable. Remarkable. There wasn't anything that young man couldn't do. Why, I've seen him go down over Shark Head as easy as a rabbit. Ah! But he's dead, you know."

"He died a few years ago, didn't he?"

"Eighteenth of March, nineteen forty-six. In a motoring accident. Near Amalfi. In Italy. Fishing port, like St. Prew, so I understand. I got it all, cut out of the newspaper. A pity, my dear! A wonderful pity. I've never seen a young man so full of life, nor so enjoying. I've seen him down in Bat Cove, when a lot of jellyfish were coming in. 'Look at them,' he said to me, 'look at them, you old Caunter, you! I could go and bathe in them.' 'Don't 'ee go for to do that, sir,' said I. And he burst out laughing, and walked up and down the beach with his arm round my neck, carrying on about those jellyfish and saying they made him as happy as a king. Happy and glorious, that's what he was. So was she—his young lady. You never saw such a pair of creatures as those two."

"Stop, stop," she said to herself. "What does it matter? It's all over long ago. We're all dead. What the hell does it matter who Ludovick was happy with?"

"His young lady?" she asked.

Mr. Caunter looked at her as one old crony might look at another, and smiled.

"Well—as to whether they were married or no, that I won't say. These artists don't think so much of matrimony as other folk do, seemingly."

"No. Sometimes they don't think of it at all."

"But, married or t'other thing," said Mr. Caunter, his shiplike bulk putting on a sudden majesty of full sail, "I can say this. They were happy. Happy as the day is long. And loving each other. Head over ears in love. Ah! One doesn't see the like of that more than once in a lifetime—and maybe not then. But there they were. I saw them. And I shan't forget them."

He drank solemnly, and was silent, looking at her as though she were the same woman at whose table he had sat down five minutes before, as though, out of the neatly raked ashes, jealousy had not exploded and hurled her back from the security of being married to Charles Vincent to the agony of being married to Ludovick Dodge. It must have begun the moment her back was turned. Who was she? Where had he got her—this bitch with whom he had been so happy and glorious?

"What was she like, this young lady?" she asked conversationally, and, noticing the fires shaken from the diamonds on her fingers, she hid her twitching hands under the table.

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"Well, now, that's a question I can't rightly answer. You know a lark by the song, and not by the feathers. And when you see a young lady so blazingly in love, you don't stop to notice what colour her eyes are. She was young, you know. Dressed herself in nice bright colours; never wore a hat. And nimble. Wonderfully light on her feet, she was. Many's the time I've seen her run up the steps from the harbour to Prospect Terrace, as though it were no more to her than the bedchamber stairs. Carrying a great parcel of fish, and the Lord knows what else."

So you had to do that, too, she thought. Hope you liked it.

"I never saw her sick or sorrowful but once," said Mr. Caunter. "And that was when he was ill. He'd set his heart on a red mullet, and she came after it. I'd have dived into the sea and brought one out in my mouth for that young man. But there wasn't a red mullet in the catch that day. When I told her so, she stood there and cursed and damned me, with the tears raining down over her cheeks. But he soon picked up, and they were ramping and tearing over the moor, happy as ever."

Different woman but the same Ludovick, she thought.

"Not that they didn't have their little differences. Wouldn't have been like lovers not to." A slow grin rocked his whiskers. "One day, I happened to be going past their gate and I heard them disputing withindoors. He gave a yell and came running down the path, and she raced after him and clapped a pot of blue paint over his head. And what did he do? Knocked her clean into the hedge, and came walking on with his easel and all the rest of his gear. And blue paint streaming down all over him."

He's got it mixed, she said to herself desperately, reasonably. He's got it mixed. *I* was the paint, and the love and the happiness was the other one.

"Yes, my dear. That's what it is to be a genius, d'you see? He went on down to the cove, and put his feet in a pool and sat drawing those little emonies. There was a young man you couldn't but help loving. Love him I did. And do to this day."

"And when was this?" she asked, after a pause.

"Thirty years ago," he said. "Yes, that's when it was. Can't be less, for in nineteen twenty-two the fishing got so bad that at the end of the season I packed up and went to work for a fishmonger in Birmingham. Funny ways they've got with fish in those parts."

I suppose I shall remember that ridiculous sentence to my dying day, she thought, with the surface of her mind.

"And when I came back to St. Prew, he was gone," the old man said.

Still silent, she laid her hands on the table and looked at

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them. They were not shaking now. Presently, she became aware that the other guests were beginning to bestir themselves and go into the dining-room, and that Mr. Caunter was getting to his feet.

"Time I was going home," he said. "The fog is blowing in again. It will be another thick night. We'll be hearing the old foghorn again in a minute or two. Ah. Well, it's been a pleasure. I could tell about him by the hour. But best not. The fog gets into my tubes, d'you see? And then I cough."

It was as though the fog were billowing past, dry as smoke, between her and the old man with his stumbling attempts at the courtesies of farewell. Absorbed in her bitter melancholy, she did not notice when he went away.

* * *

GREEN FINGERS

Whether you have green fingers or not, you have every chance of success at this purely fictional gardening—it involves no back-breaking weeding and very little digging. Count one point for identifying the garden, one for the author where known, and one for the source, making a total of twenty-three points. The answers are on page 89.

1. *From an ocean liner the author sent a wireless to Timbuctoo offering to buy the cottage with the garden which was to cause him so much trouble.*
2. *An ambitious venture in landscape gardening this, in keeping with the grandeur and opulence of the prince who decreed it.*
3. *This garden was closed to the public as a result of a violation of the bye-laws.*
4. *"Grubbing weeds from gravel-paths with broken dinner-knives"—only one of the varied jobs offered by this garden.*
5. *The garden basked in the lovely weather, the refreshments had been planned and a band had been hired; but a death in the village cast an ominous shadow.*
6. *Vines and mulberry trees grew in this garden made by a family of castaways on a lonely island.*
7. *In this remote Yorkshire garden, locked up for so many years, a lonely little orphan from India found playmates.*
8. *"Sits the wind in that corner?" In this garden a listener heard no good of himself and decided not to die a bachelor after all.*

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WEDDING DRESS

"I'll never wear it," she said, "—tell your people whatever you choose"

by MICHAEL FOSTER

IN the attic of an old house, lost in the smoky distances of the east Tennessee hills, the broken pieces of a set of bagpipes lie in a time-eaten leather chest from Ireland. Also in the chest are a pair of silver-mounted pistols, a rough frontier powder-horn, bundles of old letters—odds and ends of family history—and an ivoried silk wedding dress so small that it might have been made for a child. There is a legend of ancient pipe-music in these wild dark hills, though nothing is left of it except in the eerie broken-octave notation of the old-time mountain fiddlers. There is a legend that this set of pipes sang for the last time among the mud and cannon-thunder of Shiloh. But the first time they ever screamed in American battle . . .

Full summer had come to the wilderness, in a green and gold silence half a continent wide. Matt Conway, travelling from the west, kept watching for Indian sign among the flowering thickets. Today, fifteen sleeps from home, he was following the Wilderness Trace. It was not much of a road yet, this track through the forests from the Cumberland Gap north and westward, across Kentucky to the Ohio River. Daniel Boone had blazed and cleared a trail part of the way in 1775, only ten years ago.

Matt Conway was too expert in frontier-craft to show himself in the open reaches where the waggon-ruts of the last immigrant train which had come through were velveted over by the quick grass of summer. Slipping shadowy as an Indian among the trees, he felt citified—all fancied up. For on this long travelling, instead of a buckskin shirt he was wearing his Sunday homespun, and a sober black tricorn hat. Today he was even wearing a white stock with linen frills at the throat, still crisp from his mother's ironing-board though he had brought it all this way folded up in the leather pouch slung over his shoulder. Because today, somewhere along the road, he would be meeting the woman he was supposed to marry. Thinking a little about the bright curls of Mary Mackenzie, back home, he wondered what this woman would look like, this stranger who was to be his wife.

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Ahead of him, suddenly, one twig of a thicket stirred, where there was no wind.

In leafy sun-dappled cover, Matt waited.

After a long, breathing time, another frontiersman stepped out of the opposite thicket. He was a heavy middle-aged man, hard-mouthed, slouching in the usual buckskin of the backwoods, a fringed greasy shirt and tight-bound leggings. Matt whistled quietly, and when the stranger was looking, pushed his own concealing branches aside. Each man shifted his long rifle to the crook of his arm, and they walked towards each other.

"Seen any Indian sign, back along?" the man said.

Matt shook his head. "Not lately. But I've only been on the Trace since sun-up. Plenty of sign a couple of days to the south. I came up through there, from the Tennessee country."

"Sure enough," the man said. "They been a-looking for you, bub. You're late."

"Well, I had a fight on the way," Matt said mildly.

"Get any of 'em, son?"

"Maybe. I left there in a hurry. So I holed in, in a limestone cave, for a while. They were just a hunting party. Iroquois. They left."

"You're lucky. Cherokees would of stayed," the man said.

While they were talking, a distant sound like strange birdsong gradually came nearer, and became the laboured creaking of a dry axle.

His iron lips twitched once in a doubtful smile; and then he was gone, melting into the thickets, for all his bulk, with the rustling silence of a crafty old buck. Matt knew that on the other side of the road there would be another professional woodsman, scouting well ahead and on the flanks.

With his heart feeling tight and hard and pounding, Matt went out into the semi-cleared road, and saw the immigrant train coming. A half-dozen men with rifles lounged along uneasily—you could tell they were some of the new settlers, coming in—and behind them came the slow-lurching Conestoga waggons and the drowsy bunches of pack-horses, a skinny head going down occasionally to snatch a mouthful of grass. Women walked beside the turning wheels, with a few children straggling; somewhere a baby was crying fretfully in the fly-buzzing heat. A strange cavalcade passing under the boughs of the wilderness—tired, afraid, and grimly stubborn; a cavalcade of America's future.

With a bad spinning feeling behind his steady eyes, and cramped for breath, a physical sickness of expectation, Matt slowed down to a stroll along the moving line, the people staring at him. A bearded man grinned secretly and turned away to slap a loitering pack-

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horse on the rump; a woman dropped her eyes but kept watching him slantwise from under lowered lids. They knew. He was looking for the unknown girl beside whom he was expected to lie the winter nights for the rest of his life, while the white moons of the wilderness waned in the dawns to count their years, and the fires on their hearth crumbled with all their nights.

It was arranged for them by their families—had been for years. They had played together as very small children, everyone told him, but he didn't remember and he doubted if she did, though she was a year older. That would make her twenty-one now, a late age for a girl to be married, practically a spinster.

Matt remembered only dimly the old stone house in the glens of Ulster, grey and soft in the northern Irish rains, and the dark glimmer of floors polished by centuries. He did have the faintest, half-suggested sense of having had a companion there—a clear voice calling, a little storm of flying feet along the hall—but there was no small ghost-memory face to go along with it.

The first thing he remembered clear and whole was the ship, the great pattern of straining wood and sails and cordage moving aslant a grey mackerel Atlantic sky; and now, these years later she had made the same voyage. Against her will. Even his father, harshly narrow-faced aristocrat, the great man of a Scots-Irish settlement in a hollow of the Tennessee ridges, had admitted that she was reluctant.

"But it's the wise thing for us all," James Conway said. "The two of you will settle down, once you know each other. Happiness? I am not talking about happiness, boy. I am talking family . . . Though I daresay happiness will be possible, too. She is said to have developed into a very beautiful woman. I am assured that she is much admired." Her miniature painted on ivory, which her family sent, looked stately and disdainful. And she was an exceedingly rich girl, in her own name. But being a woman, subject to the will of the clan. It must have been a great fight, Matt thought. She had never written to him. She was coming to her life and to him in silence.

And now he saw her. There could be no mistaking. A tremendous bay horse, satin in the forest shadows, and powerful; and she was riding side-saddle with the steel-backed negligence of the born horsewoman. But he was astonished. She was a tiny little woman, where he had looked for a tall and sulky girl. As Matt appeared suddenly from among the plodding people and waggons, the big horse snorted and reared, waltzing on his hind legs. She sat small and imperious. Matt laid a hand on the glistening red shoulder and spoke softly; the horse came down to all four feet and stood quivering with nerves.

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With fingers delicate as a mocking-bird's prints in the dust, the woman rearranged a fold of her smoke-coloured riding-skirt. She had brown hair, tight and smooth, burning with unsuspected gold in a sudden patch of sunlight, and her eyes were grey and distant, he thought, as the Atlantic sky. She did not smile.

" Oh. I suppose you are Matthew," she said.

He noticed that her mouth was reckless and bitter and made for the years of maybe a stronger man than he. (Mary Mackenzie's lips were petal-curved when you walked home from church with her.)

" I am Elizabeth," she said in a queer strained voice, hardly more than a harsh whisper.

In a weakness of sick tenderness, totally unexpected, he knew how she felt. Motionless, they looked into each other's eyes with naked embarrassment; knowing all which was expected of them, they tried to look at each other haughtily. But his throat constricted abruptly, and stayed tight and dry, so that it was hard to swallow.

" Fine horse you've got there," he said desperately. Through effort, his voice was so loud and rasping it startled him. " Buy him in Virginia, along with the pack-string ? "

In silence her face had been gathering a slow and anguished colour, but now it drained quickly and became very white and bleak. Matt thought miserably: I've said the wrong thing. If I were an older man, or maybe knew more about girls, I'd know how to be now, I'd know the right things to say, light and humorous. And she would be glad of it. I think she would be thankful, and maybe even like me for it.

" Not so good as our Irish horses, at home," she said, in an awful attempt to be conversational with this crude backwoods boy. It was visible. " But the best I could find for this raw journey."

She touched the big bay with a spur and he jumped, only to be reined down instantly to a slow walk. Matt plodded along at the stirrup. He knew, from the family letters, that Elizabeth had grown up to be the typical Irish sportswoman; he had a vague idea of the weather and the drumming soaring speed of the hunting-field, he had heard of the long tired rides home to a hot bath and a firelit supper from silver dishes.

He became defiantly conscious of his home-made clothes and of his hush-footed walking in Indian moccasins. And then, so mutely and inexorably that each knew the other was thinking the same thing, there came between him and this proud woman—their children. The youngsters whom in the forthright opinion of their families and their time they were expected to have and to raise. A shadowy little company, acutely between them in their

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agonized imaginations. For a long time the boy and the woman did not look at each other. Then Matt raised his eyes. This time it was Elizabeth who swallowed, most painfully.

Even reined-in and fidgeting, her saddle-horse was walking faster than the dawdling files of laden pack-animals. So they kept overtaking trudging groups of people who glanced at them shyly as they paced slowly by. For these were the Scots-Irish cottagers whom Elizabeth had brought with her—impoverished tenants from her own family's lands, who wanted a new chance in the New World. There were sixteen families of them, and they would homestead around the Conways' lands in Tennessee.

With them there were a few Americans, from the backwoods of Virginia and North Carolina, also bound for the new country of Tennessee; but the rumbling Conestoga waggons carried the gear of folk who were going through, north to Boonesborough, to settle in Kentucky. No waggon could possibly take the trail which tomorrow would branch off to the southward, so the Tennessee contingent travelled with pack-horses.

The reason Elizabeth and her colonists had come over the Wilderness Trace was because there were now regular organized immigrant trains, with guards, advertised to travel safely from Virginia through the Cumberland Gap and as far as Boonesborough. From the Trace southward, after tomorrow, there would be only Matt as guide.

Beside a pack-horse stalked a tall old man, hawk-nosed, with a bitterly-folded mouth.

"That's my great-uncle Dermid McConnell," Elizabeth said quietly. "He's the master of all the pipers of the glens, but his sons are all dead and he has spent himself in taverning and fighting and gambling, an old, old man. So my father sent him away, with me. He is a kinsman, and my father swore him to watch over me, on the journey."

She guided her horse closer and great-uncle Dermid turned his head, fierce-eyed and ruined.

"So you're the young Conway," was all he said. Indifferently crushing Matt's fingers, his hand was as tough as his long life had been. Beside him, on the pack-saddle, hung a soft and ancient leather sack with his bagpipes in it.

And that night when the supper-fires were ebbing, dying light among the trees, someone was singing. A ragged, country tenor, timid at first, then wavering and steadying in the lament which Fearflatha Ó Gnímh wrote in the sixteenth century: "*My sorrow for the princes of Ulster.*" With the sure dramatic instinct of a homesick Irishman, he sang of a more terrible emigration, long

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ago, sentimentalized by time; when the great earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell, the O'Neill and the O'Donnell, took ship for Italy and Spain with a mighty company of Irish nobility, after revolt against the English crown, after the wild-chanting battle of Kinsale, the battle of the despairing ringing steel and the sobbing breaths.

And a Conway had been there, in that battle in 1601, with kinsmen who were Elizabeth's; though the families were now as much Scots as Irish because the forfeited lands of Ulster had been planted with Protestant Scots and Welsh and English after the Flight of the Earls in 1607. History, history—American roots go deep in human sorrow . . . Dermid McConnell was leaning against a tree, and as the sad song and the sympathetic Irish murmurs died away in the forest night of the New World, an old woman said respectfully:

"Dermid, dear, your honour, will you not give us a little pipe-music for the long road? It would give us soul for the iourney."

And Dermid McConnell turned and stalked off into the darkness.

"He won't touch the pipes, since we left home," Elizabeth said. She was walking with Matt, away from the campfires; she was maybe trying, proud and frightened of heart, to see if friendship was possible between them. There was a mist-ringed moon, and the dark woods were alive with little night-rustlings. Still within distant sight of the fires, they came to a brook, making cold silver voices among its stones. And in its margin of sand, fresh doe-tracks were slowly filling with water. He showed them to her, explaining that a young doe would often stand so, watching. She said: "The feminine is forever curious."

For the first time, he saw Elizabeth smile. A delicate sharp laughter-line creasing one cheek. The left one. "Maybe if we had met naturally somewhere, we might have liked each other," she said.

"You mean I might have known how to talk," he said, thinking of Mary Mackenzie.

"Well, saying the right thing is a very large part of it, Matthew."

They stood facing each other, her smile becoming fixed and pitiful with anxiety, a sort of bright motionless panic which gave his heart a strange and weakening squeeze. Inexperienced, and miserably scared himself—resentfully in awe of her—but because it was expected of him sooner or later, he abruptly took her into his arms. He didn't mean to be rough about it. It was just clumsiness and desperation. She was tiny and suddenly, somehow, hardly there at all, as though a man should try to embrace a shadow. She didn't even try to push him away. Her arms remained rigid at her sides, though his awkwardness bent her a little backward, off-balance.

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" Oh no, no," she said clearly. " No, please."

His woods-life, on far, haunted trails with other men, had given him nothing to judge by, here. He had never even dared put his arms round Mary Mackenzie. The most he had ever done was walk with her in the evening, and listen to her shyly breathless girl-talk. And then the last thought of Mary Mackenzie went out of his mind. Because the white, sealed face of this strange woman was his in the moonlight.

" Elizabeth ! " he said in a fear-strangled whisper. She did not open her eyes. Maybe it was the way women acted, he guessed. Blindly he thought he would have to make a beginning somehow between them, in helpless anger he found her lips, her tight contemptuous lips. And then they were bitterly salt with the tears of her fury. Dismally startled—he hadn't known she was crying, she hadn't made a sound, and was scarcely breathing—he released her so quickly that she swayed and nearly fell.

In innocence, in awful, big-handed innocence—ignorance—he stammered : " Oh, please. Don't cry. I didn't mean—"

" It doesn't matter what you meant," she said briefly.

" We are supposed to be married next month," he mumbled, his voice becoming ragged as a country schoolboy's, and his hands feeling bigger and bigger and more guilty. And shaking secretly.

" I ? To a great honking clown like you ? " Her hands went up in the calm immemorial gesture of woman, re-pinning her loosened heavy hair even more tightly at the back of her head.

" But Elizabeth—everything is all arranged, and—"

" Yes," she said. " I brought my wedding dress. It's in a new leather chest that my father had made for me in Belfast. And I will never wear it."

" But all our people. I—"

" Tell them whatever you choose," she said, and left him standing there. She walked back towards the campfires with leisurely firm steps, her long riding-skirt curling casually about her ankles, not even angrily. When Matt had been sitting on a fallen log for a long time, the doe came stealing back down the brook. Reflecting the distant red-gold radiance, her eyes watched him : unfathomable and profoundly curious.

The next morning, with wan dignity, he avoided Elizabeth. He saw her at a distance in the icy light before sunrise. She was standing alone, drinking a cup of tea with her riding-crop tucked under her arm, while all around her in a slow confusion of people and horses the immigrant train was lurching out into the road and the night guards were crawling into the waggons for a jolting morning's sleep. Once, almost beside her, there was a minute of

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harsh-shouting panic when a pack-horse, trying to bolt, knocked another one sprawling sideways under its heavy load and threw a whole string into a bucking whirl of kicking hooves and mean, biting teeth. Elizabeth merely turned her head for a cool look, and raised the cup of tea to her lips again.

Matt, having cooked his breakfast at a small, trail-sized fire of his own away from the crowd—a handful of corn-grits boiled, chewed with a strip of jerked venison out of his leather pouch, and a pinch of tea-leaves in scalding brook-water to wash it down—Matt saw to the priming of his long rifle, and threaded his way among the frowzy sleepy crowds of people to travel with the scouts, away out ahead. On his way he passed Dermid McConnell, the old life-sick fighter, who was slamming his sack of silent pipes on to the side of his own personal pack-horse.

By the time the sun came up behind them, making jewels of an hour's illusion, a little fresh and lonesome glory on the dew-soaked grass of the wilderness, Matt was ghosting among the thickets, a mile away from the toiling noise of too many people. There was no Indian sign all that day.

At four o'clock in the hot afternoon, he came to the almost imperceptible place where the trail to Tennessee branched off to the southward. And there he waited, leaning on his rifle. As the immigrant train creaked into sight, the waggon-master came and stood beside him. While the long straggling line sweated by, the two of them sorted out Matt's people and waved them off on to the dim southerly trace.

Among the uproar of parting, of good-byes, of unruly pack-strings being slapped and kicked into uneasy trots away from the waggons, the two frontiersmen saw an Irish girl break away from her family and throw herself sobbing into the arms of a boy bound for the Ohio. They never did see the end of that; there was a crowd and a great deal of noise and endlessly trotting streams of pack-horses and running, cursing men . . . And Dermid McConnell slouching by with never a glance, and then Elizabeth on her tall red horse riding slowly along, a screen of confused hurrying men and animals pouring by; and she looking at Matt as consideringly as he would look at a copper-head on a rock.

Then they were all gone, but not their noise—you could hear those Irish for a mile through the American wilderness—and the last of the waggons had groaned away out of sight to the northwest. The waggon master shook hands with Matt and said: "Well, bub—you'll get 'em through, I guess." And with a shot of tobacco-juice, a tired whisker-bristled grin and a hand upraised—in a grim good-luck, in the rough blessing of a man who knew what death could be—abruptly turning, he was gone, too. And a long way

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off, Matt saw Elizabeth had stopped her horse and was sitting there, watching him. As he started wearily towards her, she whirled the big bay and put him into a long, reaching gallop, to catch up with her people.

Matt put the damned bunch of them into camp an hour down the trail, in the protecting curve of a deep river. There was singing that night, around big foolish fires that sent blowing clouds of sparks streaming upward across the remote and indifferent stars of the New World. A great lonely singing and roaring around the flames, until Matt came hurrying back from a long worried scouting and walked through, cursing with a deathly quietness which shut them up.

Without raising his voice he drove them in trooping gangs between the river and the fires, carrying buckets of water; so that presently enormous columns of steam rose hissing, fitfully rose-coloured at first and then drifting ghost-grey in the moonlight over the wilderness. And the half-dozen scared backwoodsmen from Virginia and North Carolina, the American settlers heading for the newer country—they knew what could happen, and they gathered quietly around Matt, but glancing in thin anguish over their shoulders to where they had bedded down their children and their women.

Matt said: "We'd better divide the night into two watches, between us. We're the only ones that know any woodcraft."

So a moment later the three men he picked for the first watch were slipping away into the dark timber. . . . And as Matt stood staring down at the black and scarlet embers of a wetted-out fire, before he went back into the woods for his own far night-prowling —as he stood there, the eyes of Elizabeth were strangely watching him again, from the shadows.

Through the summer night, circling miles before moonset, he began to believe that so far the country was empty except for themselves. Of course, they were leaving a trail scarred as a battle-field, but at least he could keep them from advertising their camps from horizon to horizon. He got two hours' sleep under a tree near one of the outposts.

Grey-faced, he got the immigrants up and stumbling around while the morning star still burned; but it was full sunlight before the disorderly bunches of people and pack-animals were splashing across the stony ford of the river, a half-mile downstream. Matt had scouted deep into the forest on the other side, but now he had come back, and was standing on the south bank, contemplating them with sombre resentment. A tired woman carrying a crying child lost her footing, staggered, and went down. Dermid McConnell was the

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first to reach her ; Elizabeth was out of her saddle and boot-deep in water while a crowd came floundering and shouting.

In the midst of the vast hullaballoo of people, plunging pack-horses and fast water pouring white among the rocks, a long quavering whistle from upriver jerked Matt's head up. Running fast, Matt was down the bank and roughly pushing his way through the mob in mid-river. Elizabeth, holding the screaming child in her arms, stared at him coldly.

Two hundred yards upstream the backwoodsman who had whistled was waiting for him. He was a poverty-gaunt man who had four children. His name was Job Prethero. Silently he pointed to a freshly broken-off twig. After a quick search they found the rest of the twig, tossed back into the underbrush. It had been chewed slightly to fray it, and an Indian had used it to polish his teeth. It was still damp. From the careless evidence, they judged it was a young buck, insolent with youth.

But nothing else happened for a long time. For days Matt kept them travelling hard—days enough so that the moon, waning, hung pale in the west by midmorning light. Matt was usually ranging far ahead with two of his American backwoodsmen, while two more travelled wide, as flankers, and the remaining pair watched the trail behind. It was the best he could do.

He thought about Elizabeth nearly all the time. It was a sickness of the heart which never could have occurred with the waiting and gentle Mary Mackenzie. A deep sickness, which could turn him weak and shaking inside, and Elizabeth with storm-grey eyes—Elizabeth could not leave it alone. A feminine instinct told her that he ought to feel a lot worse than he did already. Serenely untouchable now, she stood beside his isolated supper-fire. He was broiling some venison cutlets on his ramrod. Job Prethero, his best hunter, kept the camps supplied with meat. He would shoot a deer in the late afternoon, dress it out, and leave it hanging on a tree by the trail for the immigrants to find. They would sling it across the top of a load on some pack-horse, in the evening shadows of the forest.

" I think, Matthew," Elizabeth said, " that as far as our families are concerned, we had better simply show that we are too utterly indifferent to each other to be married. That will be the best way. There's no need to have any more humiliation than you have already caused. As for my wedding dress, I'm going to leave it with you, when I go home, so that if you ever look at it you'll have more wisdom for some other woman."

Her face was small and beautiful with disdain in the firelight. He guessed it might be one thing to try to kiss a girl like Mary Mackenzie ; but something else entirely to violate the dignity of a great lady.

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"Have it any way you want it," he said, with the callous brutality of the frontier.

She went away then. And never glanced towards his fire again.

While he sat on a log, almost too tired to eat, he began to think mighty straight about Mary. It was a great relief. He had a notion that Mary could be so sweet, so restful and so sweet.

And Mary would know what to think about this strange woman's wedding dress, left to him. It could be a family joke, bitter and ghostly.

It may be he showed his trouble more than he knew, because one afternoon Job Prethero came drifting towards him on the lonely trail ahead of the travelling throng. Slouching awkwardly into step beside Matt, he spoke gruffly, that gaunt man of many cares:

"You're a good leader for this bunch, Matt. We've been talking amongst ourselves. Us who know."

Matt glanced at him sideways.

Shifting the weight of his belt-axe a trifle, Job Prethero said: "A man's mind has a-many lonesome ways to go, boy, before you're my age. And I ain't through with them yet." Then studiously shying away from any more direct mention of another man's troubles, he tried to explain with a strange faraway earnestness: "There's been many a summer evening, boy, when I've looked at my dusty corn-patch and couldn't see how the four young ones were going to eat through the winter. Sure, the rifle would bring meat, I had to guess. I'm just telling you. And there's been cold nights when I was pretending to be asleep, and from her careful breathing I could tell that the wife was pretending to be asleep too, and in a patch of moonlight I lay there looking at her one last calico dress, mended so good, hanging on the door.

"And it's then, times like that, that a man's mind goes lonesome and scared towards new lands. New lands, where there's maybe a better chance—a chance to work better, maybe, for the four little fellows. That's why I'm here, heading still farther west. We'll always be poor, that I know, I don't expect nothing else for me—but where we leave our campfire tonight, some day there'll be rich farms and maybe a better life for the children of my children. It's worth it. If it can come true, it's worth the lonesome travelling."

So that disorderly caravan of hope, of confusion, of a poor immortal human belief, journeyed south and west through the State of Franklin. Or, as some called it, Frankland. A state just organized that year, whose name was as dubious as its frontier politics. Though it had elected a governor—John Sevier; had a capital—Greenville; and a legislature which in drawling, tobacco-

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juiced debate had decided that because of the lack of real circulating money, some twenty-two frontier staples were legal tender. Beaver skins, six shillings; fox skins, one shilling, sixpence; prime rye whisky, two shillings, sixpence per gallon.

A temporary state, now forgotten; but it had as much pride as any other state, and considerably more pugnacity than most. The Irish in this pack-train were already mighty patriotic about it; and most of them were planning to enter politics as soon as they got settled.

But when the Indians hit them, it was suddenly. Indian fights were nearly always sudden. Matt, walking sadly in the heat of an afternoon, heard a shot off to the left. That would be Job Prethero. But it was odd that he would shoot a deer so early—and then there was a high shaking scream gurgling into a startled silence, as if of liquid rising into a throat. Matt started running. And there were Indians, drifting through the woods like smoke.

There were lots of them. A full war-party. Cherokees, by the style of their scalp-locks and their patterns of paint. From behind a tree Matt got one—a clean hit, a running warrior pitching in a spraddle of legs and arms, and an eagle feather flying free. With a sort of detached and deadly dreaminess, Matt blew across the smoking muzzle of his long rifle. Then he reloaded, quite carefully, and started running again.

The woods were full of shots, now, all round. The other backwoodsmen were hurrying up, into action, but there were far too many shots for them to be making. For several years renegade traders had been selling the Indians old smooth-bore muskets. You could tell the difference between their blasting thumps and the hard clean speaking of the terrible, the deathly accurate American long rifles. The long rifle—the first great product of American industrial genius, forged and bored in little one-man backwoods shops, from the Pennsylvania frontier down through the Blue Ridge.

But there were only six of them talking here—and when Matt saw Job Prethero he was backed up against a tree, fighting with his belt-axe. Fighting for four little people, and for another one he loved.

And then Job was going down, doggedly as a tree falls, under a screaming, hacking mass of Indians. And then everything seemed to fall away slowly—an Indian crawling away, head down; two more reeling off holding great wounds; another one running towards another fight in the distant woods . . . and Job down, lying crumpled. And among the half-dozen painted warriors panting on their feet, one was reaching down and taking in his hand the poor thin hair—an unsatisfactory scalp—with a knife flashing in the sun. So Matt drilled that one exactly through the head.

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From there on, with no time to reload, it was Matt swinging his clubbed rifle with his back to Job's tree, fighting off the howling ochre-smeared mob. A whirling dream of murder—maybe Death comes to every man in the form he fears the most—and Indians running in from all directions, their lips drawn back in lust for the kill.

Arms shocked to the shoulders from the sickening crash of the rifle-butt on a shaven head . . . then the hand fumbling for the knife at the belt, the last resort—

And through the woods, a strange and terrible music—the song of pipes in battle. The Irish were coming up.

Abruptly towering above the clustered struggling Indians, above Matt and Job—a great red horse, rearing, striking with iron-flashing forefeet, and a small woman leaning fiercely from the saddle, whipping with her riding-crop, whipping them with the silent laughter of a woman who fears neither Death nor any man. And through the trees, all around, the Irish—a mad whirling screen of driven pack-animals and fighting people. Even the women—fighting with axes, with clubs and stones. And the great shouting men of Ulster, with ancient fowling-pieces, with knives, with the sledging bleeding knuckles . . . and Job Prethero, on his hands and knees, crawling towards an Indian who on hands and knees was trying to get away, Job Prethero, trying to get one more. For the four little people. Because they don't come at your children without stepping over your dead body.

So it was over. As suddenly as it had come. And Elizabeth was sliding off the great shivering red horse. And looking at Matt. A look as white as death, as short as a breath. And as long as life. And she laughed. Aloud.

"Hello, boy," she said.

And with his pipes folded under his arm—the pipes that had walked ahead, in their rightful place, screaming ancient battle, ancient courage, for a New World—with his pipes under his arm, Dermid McConnell stood looking at them. That ruined and haunted old man. Smiling. Smiling because there would always be music again, and always life.

So one hot afternoon last summer, a boy stood in the attic of the old house in the Tennessee hills, looking down into the opened leather chest—the ancient and crumbling leather chest that family stories said had come from Ireland, long ago.

The broken set of bagpipes . . . they were in some of the family stories too, the stories that the great-aunts of every southern family keep alive, telling them in slow honoured voices to the children in the lamplight. The pipes of Ulster—they were sweeter, it was said,

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than the harsh pipes of the Scottish Highlands. Nobody knew much about the pipes, not for sure. But all through this hill-country, rifles had come down off the walls to follow Conways along the roads that led to Shiloh, and to Appomattox. There was a smell of history in this attic.

The boy—young Peter Conway—stooped, and touched the folds of the wedding dress which his great—four *greats*—grandmother had brought with her from Ireland. Fragrant, distantly fragrant—the boy looked up at the girl who stood beside him. The girl he was going to marry: slim and golden and proud, Joan Mackenzie Prethero of Nashville.

With an ivoried fold of that long-ago wedding dress between his fingers, he thought of the families, all the families. *These were my people*, he thought.

And then he had a stranger thought:

But they were alive—they were alive too. As we are now.

Joan Prethero looked at him, smiling a little, and he had the strangest thought of all:

They—I think they will be with us if we need them.

* * *

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

Mr. Trusler's daughter begs leave to inform the Nobility and Gentry, that she intends to make fruit-tarts during the fruit season; and hopes to give equal satisfaction as with the rich cakes, and almond cheese cakes.

The fruit will always be fresh gathered, having great quantities in the garden; and none but loaf sugar used, and the finest Epping butter.

Tarts of a twelvepenny size will be made every day from one to three o'clock; and those who want them of larger size to fill a dish, are desired to speak for them, and send their dish or the size of it, and the cake shall be made to fit.

The almond cheese cakes will be always hot at one o'clock as usual; and the rich seed and plum-cakes sent to any part of the town, at 2s. 6d. each. Coffee, tea, and chocolate, at any time of the day; and fine Epping butter may also be had.

From the "Daily Advertiser,"
May 6, 1760

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★*Like most doctors' children, young Richard Gordon expects to follow the family tradition. "Good old St. Swithin's," his father had often said, "you'll be there one day, my lad!" and the boy had thought of the Hospital as "an agreeable and definite destination like heaven." At last the great day arrives, and the raw young student walks gingerly inside.*

DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE

by RICHARD GORDON

THE medical school of St. Swithin's Hospital was an offshoot of the main buildings and had its own entrance on the main road. It was a tall, gloomy structure that held three floors of laboratories, an anatomical dissection room, a lecture theatre that was clothed in perpetual dusk, and the smelliest lavatories in the district.

The school had been built by the richest brewer in London, who was happily knocked over by a hansom outside the hospital gates one slippery winter's morning in 1875. He was restored to health and normal locomotion in the wards, and to show his gratitude he purchased his peerage the following year by founding the school. The place was now far too old, dark, and small for the requirements of the students, but as the hospital could see little prospect of the accident being repeated it was impossible to tear it down.

At the beginning of October thirty new students collected there for a lecture of welcome and introduction by the Dean. Carrying a new and shiny loose-leaf folder under my arm, I walked up the stone steps for the first time and into the dingy, small entrance hall. The brewer's name was carved in stone over the doorway to indicate the hospital's enduring gratitude, and was reflected in green and gold across the face of the King George public house opposite. Below his chiselled title were the serpents entwined round the winged staff, the doctors' universal trademark, and below that Hippocrates' discouraging aphorism "The Art is Long."

The hall, which was painted in yellow and green, contained a small kiosk bearing the word "Enquiries" in which a porter had firmly shut himself by pulling down the glass window, turning his back on it, and reading the *Daily Mirror* with undistractable attention. There was a short row of clothes-hooks as heavy as an orchard in August, and a long notice board thickly covered by overlapping sheets of paper.

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I glanced at the board as I passed, feeling some faint obligation to do so. The notices were an untidy jumble of type-written official instructions about lectures, examinations, and so forth, and scraps of paper torn from notebooks scrawled with students' writing. These indicated the pathetic undercurrents of medical school life as much as the agony column of *The Times* reflects those below the existence of the middle class. The first to catch my eye was in green ink, and said angrily, "Will the *gentleman* (underlined four times heavily) who took my umbrella from the physiology lab. last Thursday bring it back? How can I afford a new one?"

Next to it was a faded invitation for two students to make up a party to dissect an abdomen in Edinburgh during the vacation, adding temptingly, "Digs and abdomen fixed up. Good pubs." There were lists of text-books for sale, triumphantly set up by men who had passed their examinations and therefore had no necessity to learn anything else; several small earnest printed appeals for support of the local Student Christian Association; and a number of unfulfilled wants, from a disarticulated foot to a cheap motor-bike.

A hand on the wall pointed upwards "To the Lecture Theatre." The way was by a thin iron spiral staircase that ended in darkness. I mounted it, and found myself against a dull brown door attached to a spring that creaked violently as it opened.

The door led to the back of a steep tier of narrow wooden benches rising from the lecturer's desk like a football stand. Behind the desk were three large blackboards screwed to the walls, which were otherwise panelled with stained perpendicular planks. The roof was lost in a criss-cross of thin iron girders through which half a dozen electric globes were suspended to supplement the thin light that filtered through the windows under the eaves.

I sat down shyly at the extreme end of the last row of benches. Most of the new students had already arrived, and had scattered themselves here and there in the tier of seats. A few seemed to know one another and were conversing softly among themselves. The rest were isolated and silent and looked blankly at the blackboards ahead of them, like a congregation in church waiting for the service.

We were as variegated as a bunch of conscripts. Most of the students were my own age, but in the row immediately below me a middle-aged bald-headed man was scribbling some private notes with a pencil in an exercise book; every now and then he jumped, looked round him anxiously, and fidgeted like a schoolgirl. The only other occupant of my row was a pale youth with untidy ginger hair who appeared to be about fifteen, and was reading *The Origin of Species* with alarming concentration.

The clock on the wall above the lecturer's desk reached twenty

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past ten : the Dean was late again. We later found that this was a common occurrence as he emphasized his complete superiority over the students in his appointments by being scrupulously unpunctual. I was still staring expectantly at the blackboards when the door behind me groaned and another student entered.

" I say, do you mind if I squeeze in ? " the newcomer asked. " I hate being far from the exit."

I shifted along the hard bench hastily. The new man seemed so much at ease in his surroundings it appeared he was senior to the rest of the waiting class. He was certainly more distinctive in his appearance. He was a tall, good-looking young man with thick black hair and a small moustache. He wore a long brown hacking jacket, narrow corduroy trousers, a green shirt, and a yellow silk square instead of a tie. He set down on the floor beside him a polished black walking-stick, and taking a monocle from his breast pocket surveyed his companions through it with blatant disgust.

" Good God," he said.

He then opened a copy of *The Times* and began reading it.

The abashed silence in the room was maintained for another ten minutes, broken only by my new neighbour noisily turning over the pages. At ten-thirty, half an hour late, a small door behind the desk opened and the Dean bounced in. He was all smiles and geniality. He stood for a moment and beamed at the class like a bishop inspecting his confirmation candidates.

The Dean was not only late but in a tearing hurry. He briefly welcomed us to St. Swithin's, made a few remarks about its history and traditions, rapidly ran through the ethics of the medical profession, and explained that in future we would be bound by professional secrecy, and forbidden to make love to our patients' wives, do abortions, or walk on the grass in the hospital courtyard. He flung a few final remarks of encouragement at his listeners and shot off. His address had lasted seventeen minutes, and the only acknowledgment that the student next to me had made of his presence was folding his paper twice over and reading it under cover of the man in front.

" Oh, he's finished, has he ? " said the man with the paper, as the scuffling of students getting to their feet disturbed him. He peered at the clock through his monocle. " H'm," he remarked. " He's cut three minutes off his best time so far. Did he leave out that bit about the hospital traditions ? "

" No," I told him. " He seemed to have quite a lot to say about them."

The student raised his free eyebrow. " Did he now ? Then

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he's speeding up his delivery. Next year I bet the old boy gets it down to fifteen minutes dead."

I was very afraid of this superior and critical young man, but I could not help asking a question.

"You've heard the lecture before?" I said hesitantly. "I mean, you haven't just arrived in the hospital like the rest of us?"

"This makes the fourth time I've heard old Lofty say his little piece," he replied, smiling faintly. "Wouldn't have come today, except that I got the dates mixed. I was expecting an anatomy lecture."

The rest of the class were filing past us through the door and clattering down the iron stairs. We rose and joined the end of the line.

"You must be a very senior student," I said respectfully.

"Not a bit of it, old boy." My companion absently flicked a crumpled piece of paper to one side with his stick. "I'm not a minute senior to you and the end of the year will probably find me back here again."

"But surely," I said from behind him as we descended the stairs, "if you have four years' study to your credit . . ."

He laughed.

"Ah, the ingenuousness of youth! Four years' study, or at least four years' spasmodic attendance at the medical school, is of no significance. Exams, my dear old boy, exams," he explained forcibly. "You'll find they control your progress through hospital like the signals on a railway line—you can't go on to the next section if they're against you. I've come down in my anatomy four times now," he added cheerfully.

I condoled with him over this quadruple misfortune.

"Don't sympathize, old boy. I appreciate it, but it's wasted. All my failures were achieved with careful forethought. As a matter of fact, it's much more difficult to fail an examination skilfully than to pass the damn thing. To give that impression of once again just having been unfortunate in the choice of the questions, you know . . . Come along and have a beer. The King George will be open."

We crossed the road and the experienced examinee thrust open the door of the saloon bar with his cane. I had meanwhile decided that the medical course was a far more complicated affair than I had imagined.

The King George was one of those dark, cosy, pokey little pubs that, like brewers' drays and paralytic drunks, seem to be disappearing from the London drinking scene. The small saloon bar was heavy with dark wood and thick mirrors splashed with

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gilt *fleurs de lys*. The dingy white ceiling was gathered into plaster rosettes, the lamps sprouted out of the walls on curly metal stems, and in the corner a pale palm drooped over a large brass pot.

The influence of the hospital on the King George was noticeable immediately. Between the mirrors the walls were covered with framed photographs of past rugby and cricket teams, from which there stared down defiantly several hundred young gentlemen who were now respectable and ageing practitioners all over the country. Above the bar, in a glass case like a stuffed pike, was the rugby ball with which the fifteen had once won the hospitals' cup for the third year running. Next to it there hung a large, old-fashioned brass fireman's helmet. Behind the beer taps a fat old man in an apron, waistcoat, and grey trilby hat stared gloomily across the empty bar.

"Good morning, Padre," my guide called cheerily.

The old man gave a smile of welcome and stretched his hand over the counter.

"Good morning, sir!" he exclaimed. "Well! This is a treat to see you here again! Back for the new session is it, sir?"

"Every autumn, Padre, I return faithfully to my studies. Allow me to introduce a new student—what's your name, old boy?"

"Gordon—Richard Gordon."

"Mr. Gordon, Padre. My name's Grimsdyke, by the way," he explained.

The landlord shook hands heartily.

"And very pleased to meet you, sir!" he said warmly. "I expect we'll be seeing some more of you in the next five or six years, eh? What's it to be, gentlemen?"

"Bitter for me," said Grimsdyke, settling himself on a wooden stool. "Will you take the same?"

I nodded.

"I should explain," Grimsdyke continued, as the landlord filled the glasses, "that this gentleman behind the bar is really called Albert something or other, I believe . . ."

"Mullins, sir."

"Mullins, yes. But no one in Swithin's would have the faintest idea who you were talking about. Within living memory he has been known as the Padre . . . how many years have you been dishing out the booze here, Padre?"

"Thirty-five, sir, just on."

"There you are! He remembers the present senior physicians when they were students themselves—and a pretty rowdy crowd, by all accounts. There was the incident of Loftus introducing a cart-horse into the Matron's bedroom . . ."

The Padre chuckled loudly.

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"That was a real night, sir! Nothing like it happens any more, worse luck."

"Well look at the beer you sell now," said Grimsdyke reproachfully. "Anyhow," he went on to me, "this pub is now as indispensable a part of the hospital as the main operating theatre."

"But why the Padre?" I asked cautiously.

"Oh, it's a custom started by the housemen. One can say in front of patients, 'I'm popping out to Chapel at six this evening,' without causing alarm, whereas a poor view might be taken by the old dears if they got the idea their doctors drank. Besides, the old boy has a not unclerical function. He's a sort of father confessor, Dutch uncle, and Dr. Barnardo to the boys sometimes—you'll find out about it before you've been here much longer."

I nodded acknowledgment for the information. For a minute we drank our beer in silence.

"There's just another thing," I began.

"Speak on, my dear old boy. I am always too glad to give what help I can to new students. After all, I have been one myself now five times."

I pointed silently at the shiny brass helmet.

"Ah, yes, the sacred helm of St. Swithin's, by God! Feared and coveted in every medical school in London. You must learn about that before you go any further. For the matches against Guy's or Mary's and so on the helmet is laid on the touchline for luck and inspiration. Afterwards it is filled with beer and emptied by all members of the team in turn."

"It would hold a lot of beer," I observed nervously.

"It does . . . Often the gentlemen of lesser institutions attempt to steal it—we had quite a tussle with a gang of roughs from Bart's last season. Once last year some fellows from Tommy's got it as far as the River, but we won it back from them on Westminster Bridge. By Jove, that was an evening!" He smiled at the memory. "One of the chaps got a fractured mandible. Will you have another beer?"

I shook my head.

"No thanks. I don't drink much, you know. Only if I've been out for a long walk or something and I'm thirsty."

I saw Grimsdyke wince.

"Of course, one must remember . . ." he began. "You will find that in a little while at St. Swithin's you will learn enough bad habits to make life bearable. However, there is time enough for that. Padre," he called. "The other half for me, if you please."

"Could you tell me . . .?" I began, feeling I had better collect all the information I could from my companion while he was talkative.

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'Yes?"

"Why—why do you fail your examinations on purpose?"

Grimsdyke looked inscrutable.

"That is a little secret of my own," he said darkly. "Maybe I'll let you into it one day, old boy."

I learnt about Grimsdyke's little secret earlier than he expected. It was common knowledge in the medical school and seeped down to the first-year students within a few weeks of their arrival.

Grimsdyke's reluctance to pass examinations was wholly the fault of his grandmother, a well-to-do old lady who had passed the long-drawn-out twilight of her life in Bournemouth. As she had nothing else to occupy her she developed a wide selection of complaints, which were soothed away, all in good time, by the expensive attentions of her charming physicians. Her regard for the medical profession mounted with each indisposition, and was tempered only with the regret that she had not a single medical gentleman in her own family. The only person who could rectify the omission was young Grimsdyke, and while he was still at school she conceived the idea of enticing him into the profession by offering to pay his expenses for the course. Unfortunately, the grandmother shortly afterwards developed a malady beyond the abilities of her doctors and was carried away; but her will contained a clause bequeathing a thousand a year to the young man during the time that he was a medical student.

Grimsdyke did not immediately realize the full significance of this, and had begun his first year's study at St. Swithin's before it dawned on him that he had an excellent opportunity to spend the rest of his life in London on a comfortable allowance without the tedium of doing any work. He therefore took great pains always to fail his examinations. He came to the hospital once or twice a week, paid his fees promptly, and behaved himself, which was sufficient for St. Swithin's. He had a flat in Knightsbridge, an old two-seater car (known as The Ulcer, because it was always breaking down), a large number of friends, and plenty of spare time. "I sometimes think," he would admit to his cronies, "I have discovered the secret of graceful living!"

★*Life at St. Swithin's was to prove, if not always graceful, at any rate full of surprises. In next month's ARGOSY readers will find our hero face to face with his first—and most alarming—patient!*

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TYPICALLY ENGLISH

Thus from a mixture of all kinds began
That heterogeneous thing, an Englishman

DANIEL DEFOE

They are full of courtly and affected manners and words, which they take for gentility, civility, and wisdom. They are eloquent and very hospitable, they feed well and delicately, and eat a great deal of meat . . .

VAN METEREN, *A Generall Historie of the Netherlands*

Entente Cordiale

The Englishman is hesitant : " *I mean, that is, you see*—"
The Frenchman thumps his chest and cries : " C'est moi qui vous le dis."
The Englishman, at table, thinks boiled cabbage fit for food ;
But " le bon Dieu dans l'estomac " *is good French for something good.*
The English kick their leaders out with grins and a " *Good-byee !* "
The French shout " à la lanterne," " assassins " *or* " nous sommes trahis ! "
The English sceptic's thoughts are free, his words are held on leash ;
The French exclaims : " Ce vieux Bon Dieu m'embête et je m'en fiche."
The English pair for love, whereas a Frenchman pairs for life,
" Enfin, je vais me ranger " (*but he has no word for* " *wife* ").
Our " savoir-faire," *their* " savoir-vivre," *must celebrate, of course,*
A " mariage de convenance," *car l'union fait la force.*

L. E. JONES, *À La Carte*

At Home—

This absorption in pattern is one aspect of the general power of absorption, of concentration, which the Englishman so specially enjoys. It is possible that this has enabled him to pass into a civilization of the streets without becoming a part of it. So the English travel in trains ; not a company, but a collection of individuals ; first turning each carriage into a row of cottages—the word compartment is a word of praise—and then sitting in each corner with the same blank denial of any other presence that the lovers show in the parks. The English live in cities, but they

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are not citified; they very seldom produce, for example, that characteristic symptom of a city, the mob. They are urbane without being urban; creating their own environment within their own being, they can dwell in the midst of twenty miles of paving stones and pretend, with the aid of a flowerpot, that they are in a hamlet on the Downs. Or so it seems to the outsider. Perhaps the English have something completely different in their heads.

The Times Literary Supplement, 7th August, 1948

—and Abroad

Mad dogs and Englishmen
Go out in the midday sun.
The Japanese don't care to,
The Chinese wouldn't dare to,
Hindoos and Argentines sleep firmly from twelve to one.
But Englishmen detest a—Siesta.
In the Philippines there are lovely screens
To protect you from the glare.
In the Malay States there are hats like plates
Which the Britishers won't wear.
At twelve noon the natives swoon
And no further work is done,
But mad dogs and Englishmen
Go out in the midday sun.

NOEL COWARD

Candid Comment

They are good sailors and better pirates, cunning, treacherous and thievish; . . . They are . . . vastly fond of great noises that fill the ear, such as the firing of cannon, drums, and the ringing of bells, so that in London it is common for a number of them that have got a glass in their heads to go up into some belfry, and ring the bells for hours together, for the sake of exercise. If they see a foreigner very well made, or particularly handsome, they will say, "It is a pity he is not an Englishman."

PAUL HENTZNER, *Travels in England*

Beyond the Pale

He was the worst kind of Englishman; he could not even cheat without being found out.

NORMAN DOUGLAS, *An Almanac*

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Fair Play

The Englishman can't speak a word of French, but the Frenchman can speak a very little English, with which he helps the Englishman out of abysses and ravines of difficulty. The Englishman, instead of being obliged by this, condescends good-humouredly to correct the Frenchman's pronunciation, patronizes him, would pat him on the head if he could reach so high, and screeches at his mistakes.

CHARLES DICKENS

Delusions of Grandeur

The English are an amusing people.
They are a tribe of shepherds, inhabiting a small island off the coast of France.
They are a simple and genial folk
But they have one idiosyncrasy.
They persist in referring to their island as if it were the mainland.

NANCY BOYD, *I Like Americans*

The Right Way

All the people of the world, from China to Spain and from Iceland to Chile, eat their soup by moving the spoon from the nearer end of the plate towards themselves: the English, and the English only, move the spoon from themselves towards the farther end of the plate. Secondly, when the plate is almost empty, other nationalities will tilt it towards themselves; the English, and the English only, will tilt it away from themselves.

GEORGE MIKES, *Down With Everybody!*

True Blue

He is an Englishman!
For he himself has said it,
And it's greatly to his credit,
That he is an Englishman!
For he might have been a Roosian,
A French or Turk or Proosian,
Or perhaps Itali-an.
But in spite of all temptations
To belong to other nations,
He remains an Englishman.

W. S. GILBERT

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HALF TAME

He loved the wilderness, this man she had married, and he would never change

by STUART CLOETE

JACOBA DE WET often thought about that conversation. It was before she married Christiaan de Wet, and her mother had said, "That Christiaan of yours is only half tame. He's a wild man. All he likes to do is to hunt on the veld, to watch animals and catch them."

And she had answered, "Well, Ma, he's a fine, big man and a strong one, too, and he doesn't chase the girls or drink or gamble."

"Those are all natural things for a man to do," her mother had said, "and a good wife can stop them, but I don't see how you can stop a man running off into the bush and mountains for days at a time when the mood seizes him. But if you want to marry a man that's half baboon and half elephant, there's nothing more to be said. You are an obstinate young girl. It is something you inherit from your pa. Never was there a more obstinate man than he."

Well, in ten years Christiaan hadn't changed. He was a good husband but with a wild, only half tame streak in him—a love of the wilderness and the wild creatures that dwelt there. No man knew more of their ways. No man was a surer or quicker shot. But it remained strange to her, being a woman, that a man so tender and loving should kill the things he loved.

"*Ja*, I love them, Jacoba," he said. "When I see a big Kudu bull standing with his great corkscrew horns, his big ears moving, his black nose twitching as he scents danger, I love him like a brother. For we are brothers of the veld, both he and I. I love him so much that I must make him mine with my rifle. As I get my sights on him, for an instant he belongs to me." Then he said, "And I love venison. I love buck meat. It puts strength into a man."

That she could understand—to hunt for meat. But this mixture of loving and killing was beyond her. Still, he might have had other vices and he had none. He still neither drank to excess, nor gambled, nor chased women. Hers had been a fine marriage with only their childlessness to mar it. He wanted a son so that he could teach him to hunt and to love the wild animals and birds. So that he could show him the trees and bushes and flowers, and tell him

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of their growth, their nature, their medicinal values. "Whatever you want," he often said, "is there." Bark to make string, berries and fruits to eat, medicines for every illness. "There"—he had pointed into the low veld—"a man is alone with God. That country, Jacoba, is my church. It is there I go every now and again to purify myself."

Ja, a wild man, half tame, but with a mystic quality about him. A man who sought God in the creatures He had created. You could not be angry with a man who sought for God, even in so unconventional a manner. In fact, it was impossible to be angry with Christiaan for long. That, she supposed, was love. But she wished they had children. The house would not be lonely then when he was away herding and counting his master's cattle, or hunting.

That accounted, too, perhaps, for his love for Jack Henniker, the boss's son. When Jack came to the ranch on his holidays, he spent all his time with Christiaan. And the hawk, this new acquisition, was for Jack. They had an idea of using him for hunting. Jack had found a magazine with an article and pictures about hunting with hawks.

He had said, "Oh, Christiaan, do you think we can get one and train it?" And Christiaan had said, "Why not?" And then he had caught this hawk.

Jacoba looked at the clock above the stove. Nearly eight. At eight he would go and feed it. He was very careful to feed his pets at regular times because, he said, animals know the time. "*Ja, Magtig*," he said, "it is as if each animal carried a watch in his pocket!" Now it was time to drain the limewater out of the green figs and set them in the syrup. Christiaan loved green fig *konfyt*, but she hated making it because of the way the white milky blood that ran out of the figs burnt and stung her hands. Still, every year she made some, and her *konfyts* were famous.

At exactly eight o'clock Christiaan de Wet put on his hat and went out into the yard to look at his hawk. The Transvaal sun beat down on him. The red, hard-tramped ground reflected the heat upward in hot waves, the mountains were shimmering with mirage. But the heat and the glare were nothing to Lady. She sat on her perch, fastened there by a light chain on her leg, and gazed with open, golden eyes right at the sun. When she heard him come, she turned her head.

He said, "Want your meat, Lady? Want your breakfast, my *mooie meisie*?" and went to a box nailed to the big blue gum behind her. Her head continued to turn. It went right round till she was looking over her tail at him. He kept her food in the meat

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safe. Sometimes it was a piece of buck, sometimes part of a hare. Sometimes it was a dove or a rat. But that was the routine, his greeting her, his going to get her meat from the box. She always sat still on her perch and watched him, her head turned round on her swivel neck, as he cut up her food on the block below the box. Small things, like doves and rats, he gave her whole and watched her eat. She held them down with black, needle-sharp talons and tore at them with her beak. But bigger things, like bits of buck or monkey, he cut up, always leaving the hair on. She needed hair and feathers and bones. Below her perch were the pellets of such matter which, having served their digestive purpose, she had voided.

Christiaan cut some meat from a haunch of *steinbok* with his knife and put it on a tin plate. Then he turned and came back to the bird. Her head pivoted, following his movements, till once again he was opposite to her. Then, piece by piece, he fed her, talking to her all the while. She took the chunks of meat from his hand with her beak, lowered her head to her claws and then, holding them down, tore them to pieces.

Tame? It was hard to say that she was tame, even though she would eat from his hand and would get on to a leather-covered wrist when he held it under her breast. Yet she was not wild. Not like she had been when he'd caught her in the old fishing net he had strung over the top of his chicken *hok*. She'd been after the birds and had got her talons mixed up in the meshes. How she had screamed and fought as he threw a sack over her! For a week he'd had her in a dark stable. Then he let in the light little by little, propping open the door, and then at last he brought her out into the yard.

Jacoba had been angry with him about it. But women were like that. None of them, even Jacoba, understood a man's love for animals—not wild animals, that is. Chickens and ducks, calves and motherless lambs, they would raise; but wild things were something else—particularly things that eat meat. Rats and doves she did not grudge Lady, or even hares, because many Boers will not eat hare, but giving her buck always annoyed Jacoba.

But, as she said, if it was not one thing, it was another. He had had lion cubs, leopards, jackals, crows, owls, hornbills, meerkats and young buck—all sorts of things. That was his nature and he would never change. Wild things interested him, and this hawk was the most interesting bird he had ever had. *Ja*, much the most interesting because he was going to train it to hunt. Since he had read about it, he had always wanted to try his hand at flying a hawk. So that when Lady had landed in his back yard among his poultry he had seen the hand of destiny in it. It must, as he said to Jacoba, have been meant. To which, for one time in her life, she had no answer.

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His was a pleasant job, and whatever Jacoba thought of his ways it was due to them that he had got it. The Henniker ranch was big—twenty thousand *morgen*—and was really more of a game farm than a ranch. Mr. Henniker was a business man and his hobby was wild game. He preserved it and hunted carefully, only killing the older rams, or young ones for meat. The lions were what he really liked, and because the ranch was next to the Game Reserve, there were plenty of them. That was why they ran a big herd of donkeys. Lions are fond of donkeys and they really bred them to save the four hundred *Afrikander* cattle and the game.

In fact, he was more of a game warden than a ranch manager, and no job could have suited him better. This great world of twenty thousand *morgen*, with its *kopjes*, its dense thickets, its park-like savannahs and *vleis*, was his as much as if he owned it himself. All he had to do was to ride about on one of his salted horses, count the cattle, run them through the dip each week, and watch out for poachers. He had plenty of boys to help him. There were three villages on the ranch and he had to see that the natives set no snares and kept no hunting dogs.

All this was in his mind as he watched Lady eat. Jack would be pleased with her. Already she came to the lure when he threw it in the air. He still flew her on a long line, of course, but the day would come when she flew free. *Ja*, the day would come when he and Jacky took her out and she swooped on pheasants and partridges, on hares. When she fought an aerial battle with the great grey herons in the blue emptiness of the sky.

He had done everything it said in the article. He had made a hood for her head and kept her sitting in it several hours a day. He knew all the terms of hawking, which had in the old days been the sport of kings and queens. There were pictures of that, too. Men and women in strange dress riding out with hawks on their wrists. Jack was getting him gloves and other things from England. Once they got started, they would have other hawks, even eagles. It was something Jacoba might even like to watch.

She was a fine woman, Jacoba, and looking at it from her point of view he supposed his lion cubs had been too much for her. Few women had a true affinity for the big cats. Lions and leopards in the house were too much for them. But the boss was always pleased with his cubs and had told him to build proper cages for them. They had gone all over the world—to England, to America. Two that he had raised were in the Jo'burg zoo. But he sympathized with his wife. Lions and leopards were not for everybody. They were not like hunting hawks. Not like Lady. He watched her wipe her beak on her perch and begin to preen herself. Then

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he went into the house. He wanted to taste the fig syrup.

As he closed the kitchen door, Lady started again on the swivel. For days now she had been working on it. Somehow she knew that this was the weakest link in the chain—the key to freedom. And today it parted. Holding the chain with her claws, she pried at the swivel with her beak, pulled, and the chain fell on to the red ground beneath her. She opened her wings, flexed them, and with a wild cry rose into the air. She was free.

Christiaan heard her cry and ran to the door in time to see her rising vertically into the sky. She went up like a rocket, screaming defiance and joy, a free hawk, a feathered pirate, sailing the air currents on wide, raked wings.

Christiaan came back into the house. "She's gone, Jacoba," he said.

"*Ja*," she said, "and what will you do now?"

"Get another," he said. "And with the next one I shall be more careful. It is a pity," he said. "Jack will be disappointed, but I learnt a lot from her. *Ja*," he said, "I have learnt much that I did not know before."

Jacoba took a jar from the shelf and opened it. "Come," she said, "have some fig *konfyt*. It's last year's, and I only hope this lot comes off as well."

Christiaan laughed and said, "You are a good woman—what a mother you would be."

"*Ja*," she said, "I would be a good mother, but just now I have only you."

"I have lost my toy," he said, "so you give me fig *konfyt*." He put his arm round her and kissed her.

"You are a strange man," Jacoba said. "You never give up."

"A man who gives up is not a man," he said. He ate another fig. "I have never seen you give up, either," he said.

"Perhaps, Christiaan," his wife said, "we come of a breed that does not give up."

"*Nee*, if we had given up easily, there would be no Boers in the Transvaal."

"And," she said, "that hawk of yours did not give up easily, either, you know."

He laughed. "You are right," he said. "Hawks and Boers must be free. But I'll get another, one of these days. A young one from the nest and that will be different. It will think I am its pa. That is the way to tame animals, to make them think you are their pa."

"You've been pa to a lot," Jacoba said. "Pa to everthing from a tortoise to a lion."

"To everything but a child, Jacoba," he said, sighing.

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"We are not too old, Christiaan. The Lord God may bless us yet."

In the air the hawk sailed in ever-widening circles. The air felt good beneath her wings—it felt like the ground to a man, firm and safe. It was her element, the place where she was queen. Her wing muscles were regaining their elasticity. She let herself fall, dropping like a stone, banked, only to stoop again. She flexed her talons. Her orange eyes sought the ground, quartering it for game. A dove flew by a hundred feet below her. She put on speed, passed it and swooped, striking it in mid-flight, holding it, dead from the blow she had dealt it. She rose again. It was warm in her claws; the blood ran hot over them. Once again she had killed. Life had begun anew. She took the dove to a big *marula* and ate it slowly. She was not hungry except for fresh, hot meat.

The *marula*, which was about two miles from the house, became her home. Soon the ground below it was strewn with pellets of bones and half-digested fur and feathers. The *marula* was the tallest tree around. It dominated the smaller scrub and thorn. Here she rested at night. Here she sat gazing into the sun by day. From here, when she was hungry, she rose to search the clear ground between the trees for birds, for rodents, for anything that moved and was small enough for her to lift. Here she sat through the winter storms, the cold south winds that tore the leaves from the trees and sent the dust rolling north in great red clouds. And it was here, perched on the topmost branch, that the other hawk found her.

A bold, wicked killer, a little smaller than herself, he had come up on the south wind seeking he knew not what, till he found her. And she had sat waiting, she knew not what for, till he came. They met with screams in the air. They flung themselves backwards with outstretched claws in savage courtship play. They circled, raced, swooped and hunted and finally, they mated. It was still winter—for hawks breed early—and having mated, she sought a place to nest. Soon she found a ledge on a *krans*—a grey rock face on the hill that men called *Kranskop*, for it was shaped rather like a head. It had from certain aspects a face. There was a forehead, a nose and a projection that formed a sort of lip to an indentation that was like a mouth. Her nest was an arrangement of rock fragments scraped into a little hollow. In the hollow she laid two eggs. They were dark Venetian red, spotted and marbled with chalky white.

The *marula* was abandoned. She hunted from the nest, and her mate perched to sleep on a stunted tree that grew from a crevice in the cliff face.

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The young hatched. They were almost naked, but had great yellow eyes, claws, and small hooked beaks that seemed to be forever open and clamouring for food.

Now the hunt was on. Both hawks hunted far and wide, both grew thin as the nestlings throve. They grew a white fluffy down; the down was slowly pierced by blue, blood-filled quills—containers of the feathers that would follow.

They moved now, creeping about the ledge, standing on its edge with flapping wings when they saw their parents coming. The ledge was plastered with white dung of their droppings.

It was through the white deposit on the edge of the cliff that Christiaan found the nest. He had seen the hawks many times and looked for the nest far and wide. It made him laugh. "I looked too far," he told Jacoba. "Fancy them being only a few miles from the house!" He wrote to Jack Henniker and said, "We'll take the young next week, as soon as you come on your holidays." He said to Jacoba, "You see, it's all for the best. Now we shall get a young hawk that will be really tame."

"*Ja*," she said. "One that will think you are its pa."

Jack came back, and the great day, the first day he was home, dawned. Christiaan had everything ready. The rope, the crowbar that he was going to drive into the top of the *kopje*, the fourteen-pound hammer to drive it in with, the boys he was taking to haul him up, the bag with a *riem* attached that he would put the young hawks in. Everything was ready. He had read the magazine article again. His mind was full of the romantic words that were used in olden times: hood, jesses, leash.

He thought of what Jack had told him. How lucky they were to find a peregrine, the best of all hunting hawks and rare in Africa. *Sleg Valk*, the Boers called it, but it had a Latin name, too This he had memorized—*Falco Peregrinus*. Jack had taught him a lot of things he got out of his natural history books. *Ja*, he thought as he waited for him, we teach each other, do Jack and I. Every time we go out, we learn something. I teach him the law of the forest, and he teaches me what he has learnt in books and shows me pictures. Pictures of animals I know and of others in foreign parts that I shall never see. A bear, he thought. I should like to have a bear cub. That must be a wonderful thing to have.

And then he heard Jack's horse. Now they would be off. The boys were already waiting at *Kranskop* with the gear.

They left the horses with trailing reins—they were good shooting ponies and would stand that way for hours—and climbed the hill. On the south slope the ascent was easy; the cliff was on the north.

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Ja, his Lady was a smart bird picking such a place so that her nestlings should have the winter sun in their nest.

He drove in the crowbar and fastened the ropes, one loose that he could hold with his hands, and one with a loop round his chest and under his arms that the boys would lower him by. "You boss them up, Jack," he said. "I want to go down slow. Watch that it doesn't fray on the edge."

"We'll go slow, Christy," Jack said.

"Then I'm off," Christiaan said as he went to the edge—the forehead, as it were—and looked down. "It's a long way down, Jacky," he said. "A long way for a man without wings; but if he fell, he'd soon have them!"

"Have them?" Jack said.

"*Ja*, the fine white wings of an angel." He laughed, pulled his hat down hard and went over.

The boys paid out the rope slowly. He kicked at the cliff face with his feet. Sometimes he held a small bush with one hand and the rope with the other. Sometimes he held the rope with both hands.

It was wonderful here in mid-air. There were little plants, and even small trees, growing in the cracks. There was a blue flower he had never seen before. Strange that it should flower in winter.

Now he was past the bulge of the forehead. Here the *krans*, except for the nose, sloped inward, and for a moment he dangled, swinging like a pendulum. That was when he was afraid of the rope chafing through. Then he got on to the nose—astraddle, as if it were a granite horse. There they were. He could see the nest now—there were two babies in it. And they had timed it just right. *Magtig*, he was a lucky man! They just had their feathers. Another week, and it might have been too late.

He reached the ledge. The ground was fifty feet below him; Jack and the boys a hundred feet above him. He picked up the young hawks one at a time and put them into the bag that was slung round his neck. The first one he put in easily, but the second sank its claws into his hand, screamed as he put it in and shook his hand loose.

There was an answering scream from above, and Jack shouted, "*Pas op*, Christy, they're back!"

Well, what if they were? They wouldn't do anything but fly about and scream. They might even come near but they'd never dare to attack.

Lady had been near home when she saw the men. She had a pheasant in her talons. Then she heard the young hawk scream. She screamed back and dropped the bird she was carrying. It was

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only crippled, and half fell, half fluttered, past Christiaan's head. There was another scream as the cock bird joined his mate.

Christiaan pulled on his hand rope a couple of times. This was the " pull-up " signal. But the pull-up never came. Instead the ropes fell past him, like two long snakes, black against the sky. There were shouts from above. The kaffirs had let go. The hawks must have gone for them, he thought. He should have tied the ropes instead of just using the bar to snub them. Now he was stuck on the ledge till they went down and fetched the ropes and let them down to him again.

As he thought this, the hawks came down at him, fluttering and striking at him with their wings, lying back and kicking with their claws. Then Lady left him. The cock followed her. " Just what I thought," he said. " They make a big fuss. but that's all. They're afraid."

Maybe the cock was, but Lady wasn't. Up she went, up and up. Like a rocket, like a shot out of a gun. At two hundred feet she closed her wings and swooped. Every foot of the way she gathered momentum. She fell like a stone right on to Christiaan's head. She fell so close to the cliff face that her feathers must have brushed the rock. When she struck, she made no attempt to check and rise again. This was to the death, to both their deaths. Striking him, she smashed herself against his skull and the rock.

Together the man and the bird went over the *krans*—the man fell first. Somehow, with some reflex action, he managed to grip a bush or two, checking himself, but still he fell, and lay, not moving, on the coils of rope and cast pellets at the foot of the cliff. The dead hawk lay beside him, his bloody hat still gripped in her claws.

That was where Jack and the boys found him. He was not dead but his legs were broken. Jack sent one of the boys on a pony to get his father. With the other boys, he made a litter, using two coats and some saplings as bearers, and started to take him to the track where they could pick him up.

Christy came to when they put him down. " *Magtig*," he said, " so I am alive."

" You are alive," Jack said, " but I think your legs are broken."

" *Ja*," Christy said, " I think so, too. But it might have been my neck. And we have the birds. Are they still alive ? "

They were alive. They had fallen on top of him.

" Jack," Christy said, " we are lucky. I am alive and we have the birds. But I could do with a drink of *dop*. There are times," he said, " when even a man who does not drink, needs it." Then he tried to rub the sweat from his forehead and fainted.

It took them two days to get the doctor from White River to

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come and set his legs. Those were bad days because every hour the pain got worse as his bruised body became less numb.

"No internal injuries," the doctor said. "You are a lucky man."

"*Ja*, doctor, I realize it."

Mr. Henniker was standing beside him. "You're a damn fool, Christy," he said.

"*Meneer*," Christiaan said, "I am a fool but I have learnt something. If that bird had not been half tame she would never have struck me. Fully tame, she would never have flown away. Fully wild, she would have been afraid, like the cock. But half tame is something else. She had lost her fear of man and had not learnt to love him. I have learnt to fear things that are half tame."

"Half tame, half wild," Jacoba said. "A bird like the man I married. But perhaps you will be tame now." She came towards the bed. "I will tell you something. I should have preferred to tell you alone, you great baboon, but I will tell you now in front of Mr. Henniker. Christy," she said, "our wish has come true. I saw the doctor when he was here."

"You mean . . . " he said.

"*Ja*, Christy, we are going to have a baby."

"A son," he said, "that I can teach to hunt and to love the wilds and the forest."

He turned to Mr. Henniker. "You see, *Meneer*," he said, "I am a very lucky man. But Jack must take care of the hawks till I am ready to train them. *Falco Peregrinus*," he said. Then he laughed.

"And that's what we'll call him. *Ja*, *magtig*," he said, "Falco de Wet shall be his name."

* * *

WILD ENTHUSIASM

The other day I saw a man who had met Oscar Wilde in New York after his first lecture tour. He told him he hoped it had been a success and Oscar answered him gravely but with dancing eyes:

"A great success! My dear man, I had two secretaries, one to answer my letters, the other to send locks of hair to my admirers. I have had to let them both go, poor fellows, the one is in hospital with writer's cramp, and the other is quite bald."

FRANK HARRIS

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NOT ON THE MENU

"Breakfast coming soon?" he asked.
"But it's here darling," said Margaret

by HENRY CECIL

GEORGE HARKAWAY was a very nice fellow in many respects, but he was too much inclined to succumb to the temptations of a charming face or an attractive figure. He was devoted to his wife and would have been heartbroken had she divorced him, but, finding that it was apparently quite easy to deceive her, he did so constantly. Indeed, for a long time, he both had his cake and ate it, and found it very pleasant.

One spring morning George got up, full of the joy of living. His hot bath seemed even better than usual, the crisp morning air which greeted him as he stepped on the balcony for his morning sniff before breakfast gave him a pleasant tingling sensation, and Margaret, his wife, looked younger and brighter than ever as she came into the dining-room.

Funnily enough when George had sinned, or was about to sin, so far from looking for blemishes in his wife he did just the opposite. It was so comforting to think: I am just going with Betty or Millicent or April to have a gorgeous time—and nevertheless I have at home here as lovely a woman as any of them—a woman more intelligent than most of them—a woman who really understands me and whose main object in life is to make me happy. She knows all the little comforts I like—my sherry and salted almonds before dinner—my slippers just warmed—the exact way my eggs and bacon should be cooked—the soups I like—the temperature of my bath—the shirts I prefer—everything in fact which goes to make me a happy man. So thought George that spring morning.

"You look charming, darling," he said.

"Compliments before breakfast, George?" she answered. "It sounds as though you're going to be late at the office tonight."

"How did you guess?"

"Oh—when one's been married to you for ten years one does guess somehow, darling."

"Clever girl."

"Aren't I?"

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Was there a gleam of something he had not previously noticed in Margaret's eyes as she said, "Aren't I?"

"Well, let's have some breakfast," he said.

"It's just coming, darling."

They sat down and each picked up a paper. They had the same ideas about breakfast. Bacon and eggs—these were essential—coffee and a paper. Occasionally they had tea instead of coffee and talked instead of reading, but bacon and eggs neither of them ever changed. The maid came in. She brought the coffee and put it in front of Margaret. She went out again and came in with a plate of bacon and eggs, which she gave to Margaret. Margaret poured out the coffee and gave George a cup.

"Thank you, darling," he said, and returned to the paper. Margaret began to eat. George read for a time and then the inner George called him up and said, "What about me? I'm empty and it's too dark to read down here."

"Breakfast coming soon, darling?" he asked. Curious he should have to say that. Nothing was ever late. Margaret saw to that.

"It's here, darling," said Margaret, still reading the paper. He looked up. He could see nothing except Margaret eating her eggs and bacon. That was funny too, because he was always served first.

"No, it's not, darling," he said.

"Oh, yes it is," said Margaret. "Look, it's lovely and I'm enjoying it," and she held up a piece of crisp bacon with a suspicion of mustard on it.

"But where's mine?" he said.

"Yours? Oh—yours—darling—oh—of course, your eggs and bacon—that's what you mean, darling?"

"Yes, of course that's what I mean. What d'you think I mean?"

He was starting to get irritated—a most unusual occurrence. Nothing ever happened to irritate him—not at home at any rate.

"I'm afraid there isn't any for you this morning, darling," she said. "But just you watch me enjoying mine."

"What on earth's the matter? Why have they run out? It's ridiculous."

"Oh, they haven't run out, darling. I just said you wouldn't want any this morning."

"You said I wouldn't want any this morning? Whatever for? Of course I want some. I never said anything about not wanting any. Have you gone mad all of a sudden—or what?"

"Do you really want to know, George darling?"

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"Of course I want to know. Why shouldn't I have my breakfast?"

"I'll tell you, my sweet—when I've finished. Now, don't ring the bell, because we don't want a scene before Judy, and if she comes I shall tell her you don't want any breakfast and you will tell her you do, and it will be so muddling for her and she might give notice. So just sit quiet and enjoy your coffee and toast until I've finished—there's a good boy."

Puzzled and angry, but realizing that a scene before Judy would be undesirable, George got up and went to the balcony. Meanwhile Margaret went on serenely—or with apparent serenity—eating her breakfast. She was, in fact, excited and hardly noticed what she was eating. The great moment was at hand. What would be the result? Outwardly she remained completely calm.

"Now, George," she called, "I'm ready." He came in. "Sit down and listen to me." Margaret had never spoken to him as if he were a small boy before, but he obeyed.

"Well," he said, controlling his exasperation as far as he could. "What is this all about?"

"It's about you, darling, and about Fifi and Melanie and Topsy—or whatever their names are. Is there one called Fifi, darling?"

"No," he said sulkily.

"I'm so glad, darling. I don't mind the other two."

"Well, there isn't a Melanie or a Topsy either."

"How many are there, George?"

"What has that got to do with my breakfast?"

"Everything, George. You see, I've decided to do something about it, and, without going into unnecessary details, this is what I've decided. I don't think you want to leave me, but I'm not prepared to go on sharing you with so many. I felt that, if you knew that I knew all about it, it might make a difference."

"I dare say, but what's this got to do with my breakfast?"

"I'm telling you, darling. I think it would be so unpleasant for me to say to you in the morning, 'Who were you out with last night?', or when you come back at night, 'Have you been with Matilda?' Don't you agree, darling? It would be horrid. I couldn't do it. So very ugly, too. It would quite spoil the home. So, instead, I've hit on an idea. Every time I think you've been out with a girl friend I shall deprive you of one of your home comforts. Then you'll know that I know, darling.

"Don't you think it's a good notion? So much more pleasant than question and answer. No wrangling—no cross-examination—just no breakfast or no slippers—or no sherry—d'you follow, darling? And, of course, it will make it just a weeny bit more

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uncomfortable for you, darling—just to help you remember for the next time. Then you can say to yourself, 'Now let me see, is Caroline worth more than bacon and eggs? Shall it be Matilda or salted almonds?' Don't tell them of course, darling, they'd be terribly hurt."

"Why haven't you told me before?"

"Why haven't *you*, darling? But don't let's start these silly questionings. That's just what I want to avoid. Now finish your coffee and go off to work. If you don't find your bed made when you come home you'll know you have been out with Ermintrude."

"I wish you wouldn't choose these ridiculous names."

"I wish you wouldn't choose the people, darling."

There was a short silence. He finished his coffee and got up to go. He had been going to say that he'd be late back from the office, but he couldn't now.

"Well—good-bye, darling. See you this evening," he said, and kissed her.

"Darling," she said, "do have a good lunch."

He left for the office in a very troubled frame of mind. Of one thing he was quite certain. He did not want to lose Margaret. Undoubtedly, though, however lightly she had put it, there was a grim warning in what she said. He felt sure of that. It was a shame, and the fact that it was nobody's fault but his own did not help in the least. It would have been an advantage if he could have felt that Margaret was unfair to him. But she hadn't been in the least unfair and he knew it. No, he must not lose her.

At the same time he did not want to give up his various side-shows—least of all Anne. He was really fond of Anne—not, of course, in the way in which he was fond of Margaret, but sufficiently to make him jealous if he knew she was going out alone with another man. He was due to take her out himself that evening. What about it? He picked up the telephone as soon as he reached the office.

"Hometown 1783. Hullo—is that Anne?"

"Yes, of course, darling."

"Anne—I'm terribly sorry but—now look here—you must let me finish—yes, it is about tonight—I'm terribly, terribly sorry—how did you know?—no, it's really quite impossible—no really it isn't—you know I wouldn't put you off for anyone—I'll explain another time—do be reasonable, darling—all right, go out with Dick Bayley—no, darling, I didn't mean that—I—hullo—hullo—Oh, damn!" and he hung up the receiver.

"Damn!" he said again as his secretary came in.

"Anything the matter?" she asked. She was everything, or

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nearly everything, you could expect the secretary of a man like George Harkaway to be.

"Yes—everything," he answered.

"I'm so sorry," she said sympathetically, and came over to him and squeezed his hand. It helped him quite a lot. Isabel Carstairs was the most understanding girl. She knew that she was only one of many, but she never let it make the slightest difference. She was always ready to help when she was wanted. She never intruded when she was not wanted.

"You're a darling," he said. "Where shall we have lunch?"

In due course they went to Boulestin and he told her how miserable he was. She was more understanding than ever. They had an excellent lunch and drank more than usual. They did not get back to the office until late, and on the way they decided that after work he must take her back to her flat for a drink before he went home. They gave effect to this decision, and he had rather more than a drink. He reached home in time for dinner.

"Good evening, darling," he said. "You see—I'm not late."

"Sweet of you, darling," she said.

The shoes were there, the sherry, the salted almonds—everything just as he liked it.

"You're a darling," he said—but when he went to bed he found that it had not been made.

As he got up the next morning, he began to wonder how much more he would have to pay for his attentions to Isabel on the previous day. Would there be bacon and eggs? Toast? Coffee? Perhaps there would be no breakfast at all. Or was the unmade bed to be taken as a sufficient reminder? He found that it was. Breakfast was just as usual with everything he wanted. After breakfast he went over to his wife.

"I'll try to be good," he said as he kissed her good-bye.

"I'm sure you will, darling," she said.

For some weeks afterwards things went very well. Occasionally he found no sherry or no slippers—but then he couldn't drop Anne just like that. He did, however, by great strength of mind eventually manage to reconcile himself to the idea of life without Anne at all. She was most unpleasant about it—which made things easier.

Isabel helped him to get rid of the others by talking to them on the phone and lying so blatantly that eventually they ceased to ring him up. Isabel herself still remained—but she never nagged him or complained that he did not take her out. Occasionally he had to weigh up in his mind whether kissing Isabel was worth no salted almonds. How Margaret guessed so accurately he could not

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fathom—until one day when he came home, radiant in his blamelessness, to find no slippers warming by the fire.

"Have I made a mistake, darling?" she exclaimed, when she saw by his face of genuine innocence that she had. "I'm so sorry."

It happened again from time to time, and, as he was now almost entirely virtuous, he became annoyed. On the strength of his annoyance he took Isabel out one day. Returning home with a guilty conscience he found everything in order. The mistake was in his favour this time.

And so it went on—and quite satisfactorily on the whole. The penalties exacted from him by Margaret became less and less frequent while his affair with Isabel was progressing most pleasantly. It wasn't a bad existence, he thought. After all—while there is safety in numbers, two are much easier to deal with than twenty—particularly when one of the two is the sympathetic Isabel and the other is a really lovely wife. So all went well until one day, when they were at breakfast and he was enjoying his full quota of bacon and eggs, he happened to look up and saw that his wife was eating toast.

"Aren't you hungry, darling?" he said. "Why no bacon and eggs?"

"Oh, George," she said, and looked out of the window.

* * *

COME AGAIN

Farmer Thomas had a sow for his birthday and he thought he would like a litter of little pigs to go with her. A farmer who lived three miles away offered him the use of his boar for half a guinea. Farmer Thomas put his sow into a wheelbarrow and pushed her the three miles. The next morning he came down expecting to see a lot of little pigs, but found the sow in solitary grandeur.

"No wonder," said the man at the market, "what do you expect from a half-guinea boar? I've got a prize-winning boar at my place fifteen miles from yours that I will let you use for two guineas." The next day Farmer Thomas put his sow in the wheelbarrow and pushed her fifteen miles. But the next morning he was disappointed again.

Then he heard of a champion boar, thirty miles away, and was offered the use of it for ten guineas. Farmer Thomas loaded his sow into the wheelbarrow again and trudged thirty miles. Next morning, in a dither of excitement, he rushed to the sty. There wasn't a little pig in sight, but the sow was sitting in the wheelbarrow.

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PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

An Indian Love-Lyric

by HUGH MICHAEL HOGAN

YAR YAKUB KHAN, dealer in pearls in the city of Manama, on the island of Bahrein, in the Gulf of Persia, lay dying, and according to the custom prevalent among his people he summoned his three sons, saying unto them :

" Thrice hath the hand of death knocked on the door of my chamber, seeking admittance, and it is plain that soon must I leave this earth and journey to a better place. Wherefore go you now and give orders to the priests, and to the mourners, and to the bakers, that all things may be prepared for this my journey, and in the evening return here that I may divide among you my worldly goods, according to the custom of our country."

And the sons, obedient to their father, went their ways : the one to the *mullahs*, another to the mourners, and the third to the street of the confectioners, where he ordered baked meats. And in the evening of the day, all things being prepared, they went again unto their father, and he received them separately, saying to the eldest son :

" To thee, my firstborn, do I bequeath my ships, my captains, and my crews. Take these, therefore, and seek for pearls, and prosper and grow rich even as I, thy father, have done before thee. And do thou regard Ishmael, my youngest son, for he is tender, and unversed in the wiles of this world ; and suffer him not to remain untutored, but teach him wisdom. These things do, that Allah may bless thee."

And the eldest son wept, and wrung his father's hand, and he said : " On my head and on my eyes be thy command."

And the second son going in, his father said to him : " Take thou my lands, and my date palms, and my stud of white donkeys. Seek ever to increase and improve them, and thus wilt thou prosper and grow rich even as I thy father have done before thee. And do thou love and instruct thy brother Ishmael, for he is but a stripling, and a prey to the seductions of this world ; wherefore suffer him not to be misled, but cherish him. These things do, that Allah may preserve thee."

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And the second son wept and beat his breast, saying: "In my heart and on my lips be thy command."

Then did Yar Yakub Khan call forth Ishmael, his youngest son, and seeing him, he wept tears, for Ishmael was a tall youth, and comely, and great was his father's love for him. And motioning him to come near, he took his hands into his own, saying:

"Tender is thy spirit as thy face is beautiful, O Ishmael, my son, but truly thou art unripe in the ways of this world, and livest as a dove in a nest of serpents. Wherefore seek quickly to learn of the wickedness of Man, that thine eyes be not stolen from their sockets while thou sleepest; and pay heed to the words of thy brothers, whom I have ordered to instruct thee.

"And I have bequeathed to thy brothers my ships, and my lands, and my stud farm of white donkeys, and as they love their father they will see that thou art fed, and clothed, and brought up into their substance, and made wise in the methods of this world.

"But since it is well known that the folly of Man is matched only by his greed, I have made provision for thee also beside all this. Wherefore, if thou wilt take this purse from about my neck thou wilt find in it seven pearls, and these are matched, and of a weight, and free from blemish."

And Ishmael took the purse into his hand and found the pearls, and they were matched, and of a weight, and free from blemish, even as his father had said. And he wept at the wisdom of his father, and taking his hands into his own, he kissed them.

Then said his father: "But this is not all. These do I give thee because thou art my son, and I have made provision for all my sons, according to the custom of our country. But for thee, because of thy love, is there one thing more."

And Ishmael wept anew, and hearkened to his father.

"At the other side of the sea, in the city of Lingeh, in the country called Persia, there is a merchant, Abdul Gufoor, who is my partner, and I have given him a pearl to guard for thee, and this pearl is without peer. It is big as a sea-bird's egg, having the rotundity of the moon, the softness of a woman in love, and the colour of a rose at morning. Nor is there in all the earth any other such pearl.

"And there is no man in all the earth who has the gold to purchase this pearl, for it is priceless. Wherefore go not to Lingeh to claim this until thou hast learned wisdom, and have come to know for what thing it may be good to exchange this pearl, for money will not buy it."

And Ishmael, hearing this, marvelled again at the wisdom of his father, and falling upon his knees, he wept bitterly.

Which, when his father saw, he comforted him, saying: "Weep

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not, Ishmael, my son, for it is appointed unto all men to die, and my life has been a long one, and happy, and I am ready now to be received into the bosom of the Prophet. Be obedient to thy brothers. Seek to learn wisdom. Practise no deceit except that which shall be necessary to thy business, and give praise to God.

"*Glory be to the Creator of all creatures, and Provider of their provision, and Ordainer of their life-terms pre-ordained.*"

Having said this, he embraced his son for the last time and fell at once into a deep sleep. And in the evening of the following day, as the sun sank behind the hill known as Jebel Dukhan, he departed this life, and his soul passed into the first heaven, and through the second and the third, even unto the seventh.

On whom be blessings and peace!

And the sons buried their father, and mourned for him, and the *mullahs* said prayers over him, and consumed the baked meats. And when the period of mourning was over, they returned to their labours: the one to his ships and his pearls, and the other to his dates and his donkeys. And they ignored their brother Ishmael.

And going to his elder brother Ishmael said to him: "Why hast thou rejected the word of our father, and why dost thou not employ me, nor teach me wisdom?"

But his brother answered him, saying: "How shall I use thee, for the captains of my ships are men, and thou art but a stripling, and no man will obey thee!"

And going to his other brother Ishmael questioned him, saying: "Our brother has spurned me, nor will he employ me, nor teach me wisdom. Wherefore do I request thee to give me work among thy dates, or with thy donkeys, that I may earn my bread."

But his brother answered shortly, pleading: "The work on my lands and with my donkeys is the work of slaves, and unfit for thee, who art my brother; and my bailiffs are banded together that I may dismiss no one of them to make room for thee. Wherefore go apart and seek thy fortune, and in the fullness of time wilt thou prosper, and wisdom will come to thee."

And Ishmael, hearing the words of his brothers, was filled with sorrow, and going alone beside the seashore, he wept sorely.

And behold, even while he lamented, there came to him a seaman, saying: "Brother, the tide riseth, and ere the sun goes down will blow a fair wind. Wherefore lend us thine aid to push out our boat, for we would take the sea."

And Ishmael, remembering the words of his brothers, and the pearl which awaited his claiming, asked him: "Whither sailest thou, O my brother?"

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And the man made answer: "Even to the city of Lingeh, on the Persian side of the Gulf."

Now, hearing this, Ishmael rejoiced and was glad, and he said to the seaman: "Fain would I travel to Lingeh, for I am weary of Bahrein, and my brothers have rejected me, and turned me away from them."

And the merchant consoled the youth, saying: "Come thou with us, and be thy brothers consumed by the fires of Jehannam."

And they pushed out the boat into the sea, and raised sail, and set their course for Lingeh.

And when they had reached it, Ishmael took leave of his shipmates, and sought out the house of Abdul Gufoor, the partner of his father, Yar Yakub Khan (on whom be blessings and peace!), arriving there towards nightfall. And going in to this merchant he said to him: "Lo, I am the son of my father, Yar Yakub Khan, who is dead."

And the merchant wept into his beard, crying: "There is no Majesty and there is no Might, save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great." And when he had done crying he called to his servants, and ordered food for Ishmael, and bade him welcome.

And when Ishmael had eaten his fill, and was satisfied, the merchant had a couch prepared for him, and he bathed, and changed his garments, and lay down to rest.

And in the morning he rose early and went to the mosque, for he was a devout youth, and gave thanks for the safety of his journey.

But when he had returned he said to the merchant: "I would see the pearl," for he thought it unseemly to abuse the hospitality of his host by staying longer than was needful.

And going to his safe, Abdul Gufoor withdrew the pearl, and uncovered it, handing it to Ishmael, who took it, and marvelled, for it was even as his father had told him: big as a sea-bird's egg, round as the moon, soft as a woman in love, and the colour of a rose at morning. Nor was there in all the world any other such pearl.

Now, when the merchant saw Ishmael with the pearl he was affrighted, for he thought: "How shall I let this youth, who is the son of my partner, go alone into the world with this jewel, for he will be killed by robbers." And he said to him: "Knowest thou, O my son, that in thy hand thou holdest the ransom of a king, and a king among kings?"

But Ishmael answered him: "I know it."

"And dost thou know also that there are men who will kill thee for this thing, and cast thy body into the sea?"

And at this Ishmael was alarmed, and he wept, saying: "Truly is this world a place of wickedness, for my brothers have cast me

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out, and I have no trade, nor any other relation, and I know not how I shall live."

And the merchant comforted him, saying: "Fear not, for there is yet a fortune within thy hand, and it may be that there is one place where thou mayest sell the pearl, and be rich, and live thereafter in peace."

Hearing which, Ishmael ceased crying, and asked him: "Where is that place?"

"It is in India," said the merchant, "where live many kings and many princes. Do thou take thy pearl and travel to Bombay, a city of India, and seek there from the merchants where thou mayest sell it."

And Ishmael smiled, and wrung him by the hand, and said: "I will do this thing."

And forthwith he began to make preparations, selling one of the smaller pearls to the merchant for gold, and attending to his passport, and his ship, and buying clothes; for it was fitting that he should be attired according to his rank as an Arab, if he were to meet with kings.

And on the morning of the seventh day after his arrival in Lingeh he took leave of Abdul Gufoor, and secreting the pearl with the smaller ones in a bag about his waist, he took ship for India.

And he sailed down the Gulf and entered the Arabian Sea, and his eyes marvelled at the sights which he saw on his journey; whales, and dolphins, and flying fishes, and mighty ships of war. And on the fourth day, at dawn, he sailed into the harbour of Bombay, where his eyes were assailed by strange sights and his ears by strange sounds, and his heart sang with joy at the colours of that country, for they were many and beauteous.

And when he was gone ashore there gathered around him a multitude of men, among whom was one that spake in his own tongue, who examined his passport, and questioned him about his property, for there was a law in that land that forbade any traffic in pearls without surrender of gold to its rulers.

Whereon Ishmael, who was an honest youth, and without guile, showed him the pearl, and declared it unto the law.

But the man, seeing the pearl, laughed him to scorn, and called to his fellows in a loud voice, saying: "See. Here cometh a fool who says that he hath a pearl, and it is so big that I, who have spent my life upon this strand, have seen none that is even the half so big." And turning upon Ishmael he vented his wrath upon him, saying: "It is not meet for a youth of thy years to jest with thy betters, and to say thou hast a pearl, when it is only a stone, for if that stone were a pearl thou wouldst be attired in silks,

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and have slaves carry thee ashore and fan thee with fans. Wherefore begone, ere I call guards, and have thee put into a safe place."

And when he heard these words, Ishmael gathered his belongings, and left that place, going at once into the city. And such was his delight at the sights which he saw there that he went into an inn, and took lodging there, and for a space of three days did he walk the city, and saw the holy men, and the beggars, and the temples (which he called idolatrous), and many other strange things which are in that land.

But on the fourth day he went into the market place and sought out a merchant, who was called Elahi, a dealer in pearls, and together they went to the shop of this man.

Where, when Ishmael showed him the six pearls, he was greatly pleased, but, showing nothing in his eyes, he said only: "I will buy them," and he named a price which was profitable to him. But Ishmael, misunderstanding the coinage of that country, and being without guile, answered: "Agreed," and, passing over the pearls, he pocketed the sum.

When that merchant saw this thing, he said unto himself: "This youth is a fool," and turning to Ishmael he asked him: "And hast thou other pearls that thou wouldst sell?"

But Ishmael smiled at him and said: "None which thou hast the money to buy."

Now, hearing this, the merchant Elahi was much pleased, for it told him of the ignorance of the youth, for he was the richest merchant in the city, and this was well known. Wherefore he thought: "Glory to God, the Creator of this wonder," for his nose was sharp for a bargain. And smiling at Ishmael he said: "Show me."

And Ishmael showed him the pearl, and, the merchant seeing it, he cried aloud with astonishment.

And it lay in the palm of his hand, and was round as the moon, soft as a woman in love, and coloured as a rose at morning, and he knew that nowhere in the world was there any other such pearl, and, turning to Ishmael, he looked upon him with a fresh eye, and he chided himself, saying: "Great indeed is Allah, and the Humbler of the proud, for this youth is richer than the Nizam, and must know that I have cheated him."

And he looked yet again upon Ishmael, but, seeing no guile in the youth, he wondered, and his soul began to thirst for the pearl, for he was a greedy man, and crafty.

So, returning the pearl to the youth, he said: "It is even as thou sayest, for not all my gold will purchase this jewel, yet even so might I be of assistance to thee, for I know where is that for which thou mayest be inclined to barter it."

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Now, when Elahi spake thus he was scheming, for he had a step-daughter whose beauty was a legend, and he thought to offer her hand in marriage to Ishmael, and thus gain the pearl, and he knew that the girl would assist him in this plan. So he smiled upon the youth with fondness, saying: "Tell me where thou art staying, that I may send servants to collect thy baggage, for I would be honoured if thou wouldst live in my house while thou art here."

Hearing this, Ishmael was much pleased, for he wished greatly to see how the merchants of that country lived in their homes, and he gave to Elahi the name of his lodging, and together they repaired to the home of the merchant. And being arrived there, he was shown into a chamber, cool and lofty, that looked down upon the seashore, and the servants of Elahi brought him sherbets, and lemonade, and they massaged his feet.

And in the evening the merchant coming to his chamber, said: "I have prepared food and entertainment for thee, wherefore bathe, and dress thyself, that we may sit down to meat."

And Ishmael bathed, and anointed his head, and dressed himself, and sat down with the merchant to eat, and being young and of good appetite he ate well, doing honour to the table of his host. And as he ate he bethought himself: "Truly does this man regard me highly," for the table was covered with delicacies.

And lo, after Ishmael had eaten his fill, and had belched seven times seven to show approval of the viands, he lay back among the cushions, and the merchant summoned his servants to light the hookah, and he called forth musicians and dancing girls.

And when the entertainment was over the merchant turned to his guest, saying: "One thing more is there to see, ere thou goest to thy chamber, and that is my step-daughter, and her name is Shah-Dara." And, clapping his hands, he summoned the girl.

Now, when this girl entered, Ishmael rose to his feet and was amazed, for never before had he seen such beauty, and, raising his hands above his head, he called out in a loud voice: "*Alhamdolillah!*" which, being interpreted, means: "Praise God!"

And truly did this cry come out from his innermost heart, and truly was it meet, for she was a pearl among women, and he was at once fallen in love with her.

Which, when the merchant saw, he smiled unto himself, for he had told the girl of his plan, and she had sworn to serve him.

And, seating herself on a couch, Shah-Dara took up a zither, and sang a love song, whereat the youth cried out again, saying: Glory to the Great God, the Maker, the Shaper, and the Fashioner of this woman, for she is perfect."

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And her eyes were like sunlight on deep waters, and her mouth like mohur blossom, and her hair black as sea coal, and her shape was as the end of all desire.

And when she had sung her song she withdrew, according to the plan of the merchant, whereby he thought to capture the pearl from Ishmael. And, saying to the youth: "It is time to rest," he led him up to his chamber.

Now, Ishmael, when he got into bed, slept but poorly, for the beauty of the girl filled all his thoughts, and when the dawn came he arose and walked out on to the balcony which overlooked the seashore. And standing there he listened to the sound of the sea surging over the beach, and he watched the mina birds as they awakened among the trees, but all his thoughts were of Shah-Dara.

And after the morning prayers Ishmael approached the merchant eagerly, and said to him: "Thou hast spoken falsely, for yesterday thou toldest me, 'I have not the price of thy pearl,' yet have I seen with mine own eyes that thou hast."

But his host, feigning surprise, asked him: "Of what art thou talking?"

And Ishmael told him: "Thy step-daughter, Shah-Dara, for she is the price of my pearl, and my father had told me that money would not buy it. Wherefore if thou wilt give her to me in marriage, the pearl is thine."

But the merchant, feigning amazement, replied: "I must ask her." And he summoned the girl.

Whom, when Ishmael saw, he cried again: "Glory to God, the Creator of this creature," for he was a devout youth.

And Elahi explained to her the feelings of Ishmael, and he showed her the pearl that was her price. Which, when she saw, she marvelled at it, and looked from the pearl to the youth, and from the youth to the pearl, as if disbelieving her eyes, and she said: "I will marry this man, if so be he wills it," and, lowering her eyes, she went out from their presence.

And lo! within the course of a moon the wedding was arranged, and the guests invited, and the garden hung with lights. And for seven days there was feasting, and music, and merrymaking, and Ishmael was married to his bride.

And the merchant, receiving the pearl, was well pleased, and he smiled at the folly of the youth, for the pearl was beyond price.

But Ishmael also was satisfied, for he knew that there are joys beyond the price of gold.

Now, after the marriage was blessed, and the guests had showered the couple with rice, and had garlanded them, the two quit the

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house of Elahi, and left for a destination which, at the wish of the bride, was concealed from all men, and this was Africa.

And when they were aboard ship, Shah-Dara went unto her husband, saying: "I have deceived thee," and he, stricken with dismay, asked: "Wherefore?"

And she answered him: "Because my step-father has forced me to marry thee, that he might gain the pearl."

Now, when Ishmael heard these words his soul was plunged into darkness, and he cried out in a loud voice, saying: "Allah curse all faithless women, and adulterous!"

But Shah-Dara only laughed at him, saying: "Fear not, for this is not the end of my tale, since when first I saw thee I loved thee for thyself, because of thy love for me, for which thou wouldst even give thy pearl, and this was priceless. And because my step-father would have wronged thee, I have balanced the scale, and this is meet, for he is an unjust man, and greedy."

And taking the pearl from inside her dress she showed it to Ishmael, saying: "I have taken this back from my step-father."

And the pearl lay there in her hand; and was round as the moon, soft as a woman in love, and the colour of a rose at morning, nor was there in all the world any other such pearl. But Ishmael was without speech, for he was a just man, and deceit was beyond him, and he stared with wide eyes at Shah-Dara.

Yet Shah-Dara read all his thoughts, and smiled at him, pressing his hand, and she soothed him, saying: "It is but just, for he would have had me deceive thee, and thou art my husband and my love."

But still was Ishmael distressed, and she caressed him, saying: "More than this will I do for thee, for my love is great, nor will any man deceive thee whilst I yet breathe, for thou art guileless.

"And if I have done wrong my sin is small, and it will warn thee that I am not perfect, which it is good for thee to know, nor is any man perfect, for perfection belongeth only to Allah."

And Ishmael heard the words, and he was comforted, for her sin was small, and had chastised a deceitful man. And he knew that he had come to the beginning of wisdom, and, gazing anew upon the beauty of his bride, he embraced her fervently, saying:

"*Verily, all sins doth Allah forgive; aye, Gracious and Merciful is He.*"

* * *

DOUBLE-CROSSED?

A cynic is a man who looks both ways before crossing a one-way street.

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BATH-TIME

Many recite their writings in the bath.
How pleasantly the vaulted space echoes the voice!

HORACE, 65–8 B.C.

He was much and often troubled with the gowte, and his way of cure was thus; he would sitt with his legges bare, if it were frost, on the leads of Cockaine house, putt them into a payle of water, till he was almost dead with cold, and betake himselfe to his stove, and so 'twas gonne.

JOHN AUBREY, *Brief Lives: William Harvey*

Water Test

The extrovert
Leaps for a shower
And slaps with zest
And sings with power.

The introvert
In hot suds sinks
And lies and thinks
And thinks and thinks.

The ambivert,
Unbigoted,
Cares less how he
Is spigoted.

M. M. PARRISH

Round-up on the Ranch

With the announcement that a bath was to be taken everyone was agog. The time and the place were argued at length. If it were I, then the wood was stacked outside the shanty. The big, round washtub was placed before the fat stove on a bearskin. Out of cupboards and drawers came bath salts, scented soap, cologne, talcum powder. Big bath towels and a pair of big wool socks were hung on chair backs to warm near the fire. Carried from the creek were pails of ice-cold water, and four big kettles were set to boiling on the kitchen range.

When the cabin fire was roaring hot and everything was set—Dorothy and George and anyone else who happened to be visiting at the time sped across the snowy path, each bearing a steamy tea

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kettle. These they would hand through the door and Ted and I would mix a delicious brew. Hot from the kettles, then cold from the pails, a feel and a stir and the final curled-up squat. Getting warm and soapy and wet all over at one time was something to remember after days of washing in chilly, small sections. The cabin windows were dark with scented frost—where water splashed over the tub and ran off the bearskin on to the uneven floor little pools of thin ice would form. The round stove was cherry red.

Then out of the tub with a bound I would come, neatly corrugated on the derrière, slipping warm, wet feet into the woolly socks. A brisk rub with the dry towel and the bather glowed like the stove. When I was dressed, brushed, and combed, Ted would shout and in would march the waiting audience to smell the steaming room, to help carry the bathtub to the creek and to Oh and Ah in vicarious enjoyment; the bather, meanwhile, shining like an Oregon Pippin under their envious gaze.

HAYDIE YATES, *Seventy Miles from a Lemon*

Fundamental

I test my bath before I sit,
And I'm always moved to wonderment
That what chills the finger not a bit
Is so frigid upon the fundament.

OGDEN NASH

Q.E.D.

Often times his servants got him againt his will to the bathes, to washe and annoynt him: and yet being there he would ever be drawing out of the Geometricall figures . . . And while they were annointing of him with oyles and swete savors, with his fingers he did draw lines upon his naked body: so farre was he taken from himself, and brought into an extasy or trauns, with the delite he had in the study of Geometry . . .

PLUTARCH, *Lives, translated by* SIR THOMAS NORTH, 1579

Deep End

The Dowager Duchess of Norfolk bathes, and being very tall she had like to have drowned a few women in the Cross Bath, for she ordered it to be filled till it reached to her chin, and so all those who were below her stature, as well as rank, were forced to come out or drown . . .

ELIZABETH MONTAGU, *in a letter*, 1740

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Assembly Line

From as far back as I could remember, the time would come now and again when my mother would drastically announce: "Wash All-Over tonight." The operation was sufficiently complicated to make it necessary for all the children to be Washed All-Over on the same night, so that the business could be got through and done with. A big wooden tub was put in front of the kitchen fire, kettles were boiled, the water prepared, and No. 1 began the ritual. First you knelt on a mat alongside the tub, stuck your head into the water, soaped your hair, and washed it. Then you got into the water and Washed All-Over.

While No. 1 was in train, a kettle would be boiling to warm up the water—the same water—for No. 2, who would go through the same ritual while No. 1 was drying his or her hair, kneeling before the fire. The kettle was kept going all the time, so that the water was hot for all, though for the last of the clan it would also be pretty slimy. And by the time the last was done, and had joined the kneeling line by the fire, No. 1 would be dry, dressed for bed, and sent packing.

But now that was done with. We had a bath!

HOWARD SPRING, *Heaven Lies About Us*

All Things Have Their Bounds

Against the rigours of a damp cold heav'n
To fortify their bodies some frequent
The gelid cistern, and where nought forbids
I praise their dauntless heart: a frame so steel'd
Dreads not the cough . . .
But all things have their bounds . . .
With us the man of no complaint demands
The warm ablution just enough to clear
The sluices of the skin, enough to keep
The body sacred from indecent soil.
Still to be pure, ev'n did it not conduce
(As much it does) to Health, were greatly worth
Your daily pains . . .
This the venal Graces know,
So doubtless do your wives . . .
Nor is it less (all prudent wives can tell)
To lose a husband's than a lover's heart.

JOHN ARMSTRONG, M.D.,
The Art of Preserving Health, 1744

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BONNET OVER THE WINDMILL

And like the tread of a giant in soft slippers the great sails went hurоosh—hurоosh—hurоosh

by CLIVE BURNLEY

I RECALL the time when there was a mill in nearly every parish in this hundred, and they weren't preserved by Trusts or Societies to adorn the countryside: they worked, they spun day and night so long as the winds blew, and if you couldn't tell the time by them you could do something a sight more useful—you could tell the weather.

There was Thorverton Mill, now. She was a fine mill, if ever there was one, and the spire of her was a great oak post three foot square, and her sails were a hundred foot long, tip to tip, and they came round swoosh through the air like the archangel's sword, one after another. She'd never had a miller that wasn't a Rawlins, ever since that day she first ground corn two hundred years since, and the youngest Rawlins as ever hung weights on her striker chain was Joe, who came into her when his father died about the time the railway reached Clifton Abbots.

Lively men, millers were, like sailors, because the wind was mistress of both, and you have to be spry and sure with that skittish lady; but there weren't many sharper nor surer than Joe, not only with her, but with another lady I call to mind. Up there from the mill you had what you'd call a bird's eye view; right over Thorverton, and past Latch Hall and Bramble Hill, and back of Bramble Hill to the sea. But particularly you could see the length of footpath that came out of Thorverton by the Falcon Inn, where the stables were, and went past the mill-hill itself, and then over Curry Common to Fitznorton Hugh.

Now a girl used to walk that way, on early summer evenings, twice or thrice a week, and more than once young Joe nearly let the stones run dry watching her. Not that he could say exactly why he watched her, except that it gave him pleasure, but quite often, too, he saw her on that path in circumstances which made the sight no happiness to him at all. She would then be strolling on the arm of Badger Clarke, that was son to the landlord at the Falcon. And that was a sight too much like the first act of *Maria*

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Marten and the Red Barn, Joe thought—altogether too similar.

Now millers are as well informed as they care to be, for farmers and merchants and housewives come to the mills—and in this one there was always Tiny Tarbet, that was miller's man and carter, and as galloping a gossip as any churchwarden's wife; so that within a few days young Joe came to learn that the girl he liked watching was Molly Lucas, daughter to old Mr. Lucas that had a month or so past retired on his life's earnings as a watchmaker in great London, and come to live in Flint Cottage, opposite the almshouses in Fitznorton Hugh.

It wasn't so much, at first, that Joe set to wondering about silk purses or sows' ears, and figuring how you could make a miller's wife out of a watchmaker's daughter, or country legs out of London ankles; but he did fall to thinking that if he could keep *this* Maria Marten out of that Red Barn it would be a thing that might help to balance his account at Judgment Day, and therefore worth the doing. But how to do it? He chewed the thing in his mind as fine and small as his millstones chewed wheatmeal . . . and still there was no answer to it. And it was just then, when human ingenuity had failed, that Divine Providence stepped in, in the sudden way it sometimes has.

It was the sunset end of an autumn evening and through the chinks and tears in the blue clouds the warm wind was herding up from the west little sparks of gold, and furnace colour glowed like embers, and the great sails of Thorverton Mill went gently huroosh-huroosh-huroosh as they spun, and behind Bramble Hill the flat sea shone like a pane fallen out of the sky's window. Young Joe Rawlins was on the bagging floor of the mill, and with him was Tiny Tarbet, who was only by a hand-span too short for a circus giant—a raw-boned rascal, with brows like hedges over his eyes, and a stoop at the shoulders, from bending all the time to get through doors and under ceilings.

The mill door opened and Molly Lucas herself, the very same, in her blue and white bonnet and her blue and white linen dress, out of breath and out of countenance, rushed two steps past the door and stopped, not knowing what to say, before them. It was likely she had thought the place empty, for great London was never very thick with wind-wheels and she knew little enough about such things.

"*Well!*" said young Joe, just looking; glad to have a near sight of her, and thinking how the excitement she was plainly in was as good as a bright light for seeing her by, because it set sparks in her eyes and two bright colours in her cheek, and made her lips open far enough to let you guess what her smile might be like . . .

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"*Well!*" said young Joe. And Tiny Tarbet scratched his head.

"Help me!" she said. "Oh, please!"

"Easy now!" said the miller. "What's your trouble?"

"Trouble!" said Tiny Tarbet. "We've a way of our own for trouble in this here mill . . . there was the time we lashed Zachary Taylor's arms to the shutters and sent him round with the sails, sixty mile an hour, till the blood came out of his ears."

Molly Lucas had turned to the little square-paned window alongside the door and stared out of it, making little sounds of misery.

"He's coming here! He's coming to the mill! I know he saw me . . . What shall I do?"

"But who? Who's coming?"

"Don't you understand? . . . My father!"

"'Tis a blessing from Heaven," said young Joe, "a happy family life . . . but easy now. The villain shan't find you, don't you fret."

"How dare you call my father a villain!" she cried.

"Why should a young lady like you want to run away from a father as wasn't one?" asked young Joe.

"Oh, he's nearly here!" she said. "Hide me!"

"Well now," said Joe, "I daresay we can find a mouse-hole for you, if you do what I say. Come here, now . . ."

Meantime fast and angry up the footpath came Mr. Ralph Lucas; his shiny silk hat jerked a little on his head at each fierce footfall and the grey curls of his whiskers looked as if they were the rising of hackles, though they always curled like that, and his face was bunched and puckered into a scowl all the more alarming because it was plainly a face that was more usually bunched and puckered in quite other directions. He wasn't only angry; what was worse, he was puzzled. Hadn't he forbidden his daughter, which was something a man could do thereaday, ever to meet again that flashy young scape-grace from the inn? And now, as he came up the path, he had plainly seen them part at the stile, and not, evidently, with harsh words . . . and he hadn't lost sight of his daughter for a second until he had seen the blue and white flutter of her rush up the steps into the mill, and he was going to get to the bottom of it, come what may.

But wind-wheels are rare in great London; there were none at all in the Strand; he knew no more about them than he knew about coal-mines.

Now Thorverton Mill was a post mill, which is to say that it was in two separate parts; there was the brick round house, firm on the earth, that never moved a quarter inch no matter how wild the wind blew. Up from its firm footings in the round-house stood the great oak post, and hung upon this was the whole of the rest of

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the mill, all three floors of it, and as the wind changed quarters so this whole poised building swung round on its post to keep the headsails into wind.

What made it swing was another smaller windmill, the fantail, which was geared to wheels under the steps, and when the wind changed and took the fan out of the lee of the building up she started, round went the little wheels on their paved circle around the hill, and steps and mill and all, every stick and stone of Thorverton Mill except the round house and one post, swung round until the fan was becalmed again; which was just when the head-sails came back into the wind . . . and these are things that twenty years ago I shouldn't have had to explain to any, except such as Mr. Lucas.

He didn't know. And because he didn't know, it was the mill herself that took the first edge off his anger, by giving him something else to think about. He came up to the steps, his foot was no more than six inches from the lowest tread . . . and then the wind changed a point, the fan started up, and with a creak and rumble the steps ran thirty feet away from him. First, it made him angrier; clearly some enemy up there in the mill was working some peculiar machinery to set the steps out of his reach; but he'd get to them, just the same. And he began to run after them at a pace not really advisable in those over sixty. And then the wind changed again; and steps and spinning fan came rolling down upon him at such a speed that only a last-second leap saved him from great injury; but it didn't save his hat, which toppled off his head and gambolled off down the slope, and cost him the next six minutes to retrieve again.

It was an antic wind, just at that time; backwards and forwards the steps ran, sometimes lazily, sometimes in vigorous little bursts, never quite still for long, as nimble as a weathercock in shifty weather, for it was nothing more than a weathercock, after all . . . and old Lucas stalked it like a primitive hunter at dodging-grips with a cornered quarry, stealing up on it, trying to cut it off, pretending to ignore it, and every now and again chasing his hat down the hill. But at last, in a minute's lull, he leapt on the steps, exhausted but triumphant, ascended them, flung open the door of the mill.

First of all he saw Tiny Tarbet, tall as some trees, and nearly hairy enough to be in leaf, blotched white with flour and wheatmeal.

"Where is my daughter?" he said, but not as sternly as he meant to.

"Eh?" said Tiny Tarbet.

"My daughter! . . . Where is she?"

Tiny Tarbet scratched his head. "Why? Have you lost her?"

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"Now, my man," said Mr. Ralph Lucas. "Don't pretend you don't know what I mean. I plainly saw my daughter come into this mill and I demand to . . ."

"I shouldn't demand quite so hearty, if I was you, though," said Tiny Tarbet. "Not if you was making trouble, like. We got a way of our own with trouble in this here mill. I recall when we strapped old Ted Smith to the shutters, and sent him round with the sails, sixty mile an hour, till his eyeballs dropped out . . . And we don't make flour out of anybody's daughters; leastways we never have when I bin here."

"I tell you," said Mr. Lucas, "I *know* my daughter is here. I distinctly saw—"

"Visitors, eh?" said young Joe, in a genteel kind of surprise, dropping down the ladder from the stone floor, as sweetly reasonable as a parson at collection time. When old Lucas told him exactly what he was looking for, young Joe was just as reasonable: didn't see how the girl could have got in, not without anyone noticing, but, Lord love us all, he could understand a father's anxiety; the mill wasn't as large as the Crystal Palace, and they could search it, every niche and cranny, in twenty minutes, which he proposed to do, jointly with Mr. Lucas, right now. He couldn't say fairer than that; Mr. Lucas agreed he couldn't.

So they searched. And never as long as he lived did Mr. Ralph Lucas forget the first time he went over a windmill, for a lifetime of squinting at the vitals of fob-watches through his working lens had not prepared him for the terrific experience. The stone room wasn't so bad, with its purring millstones and its warm and nourishing smell of wheatmeal, except that even here there were great cog wheels spinning and driving bands flapping. ("Don't step sideways, now," said young Joe. "That's how my uncle had his leg torn off.") But the topmost floor of all was nightmare, the floor where the corn bins were and where the great wooden head wheel, with burnished wooden teeth, went murmuring round, looking as large as the moon.

Here it was rather like being in a sailing ship at sea in a freshening wind, though Mr. Lucas couldn't know that, never in his life having been in those circumstances. The whole room rocked and swayed with a dozen distinct sorts of motion; teetering rhythmically as the sails spun and tilting and bucking a little as the wind freshened or fell; and every so often it would whirl completely round upon itself, first one way, then another, as the whole mill moved to set its face against a change of quarter. The meshing wheels mumbled softly; a thousand pieces of timber creaked and made frog-like noises; the wind played flute music as it whipped over the jagged edges of the outside weatherboarding; and all the time the sails

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went huroosh-huroosh-huroosh like the tread of a giant in soft slippers. Up here Mr. Lucas felt ill; his stomach curdled horribly.

But he had his duty to do; determinedly he looked everywhere; in the bins, and behind 'em; even felt the sacks. All three floors of the mill they scoured and then, to conceal nothing, young Joe took him down the steps, waiting until they steadied, on to firm earth again; he unlocked the door of the roundhouse, although it took him some time to find the key, and they looked here as closely as elsewhere among the stored bags and barrels, missing nothing. And finding nothing.

Mr. Ralph Lucas was bewildered.

"But I can't have dreamed it! . . . Or did I? Perhaps, after all, she went to her aunt's in the village, where she said she was going, and I—I fancied things."

"Easy enough," agreed young Joe. "The light's none too good. Why not go down to her aunt's and see?"

"Perhaps I'd better," said the old man, and went.

But mills are odd places, and they have sets of back stairs which aren't stairs at all, but only ropes and chains that dangle through the ceiling and through the floor—only odd lengths of line to Mr. Lucas, but to you and me and young Joe they make up the sack hoist. And that was how the trick was done, you see: for before her father came into the mill Molly had been lowered down through the hatch into the roundhouse, so that all the three working floors could be scoured and every grain of corn lifted for her in vain; and then, while young Joe took the old man, *outside* the mill, down the steps and through the door into the roundhouse, Tiny Tarbet hoisted her up through the hatch on to the bagging floor again, so that by the time the search party entered the roundhouse, after waiting for the steps to steady, and having some trouble with the key, there was neither sight nor smell of her.

So the old watchmaker, daubed patchily with meal, and with no gloss left at all upon his dented hat, went anxiously back to the village, and when young Joe returned again alone to the bagging floor there was Molly, sitting on a sack, still glowing with her excitement, for apart from the hide-and-seek itself, riding ropes through ceilings was a new kind of adventure for her, and a rather exhilarating one.

"How *can* I thank you?" she said.

"I'd prefer you didn't try," he told her. "I'm not altogether easy in my conscience about the business and that's the truth of it."

"I hate it, too," she said, "oh, I really do. But—oh, you couldn't understand."

"No," he agreed. "There are some things beyond reason, and this is one. I wouldn't understand, so you don't have no

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call to tell me; just run away quick-sharp home, and try to put a little comfort in that old man's heart."

"Oh, I *do*!" she cried, near to tears . . .

"This is open house day, looks-like," said Tiny Tarbet, who had lit a lamp hanging from the ceiling and was peering out of the window into the near purple dusk, "Who's this a-coming now?"

"He isn't coming back?" cried Molly and rushed to the window.

But this time it was worse.

"It's Henry!" she cried, "oh, he mustn't know I'm here. He's so jealous he'd kill you! Where can I go? He's almost at the door . . ."

Young Joe grinned; this was more to his taste, because he knew who Henry was. There was no time for elaborate trickery; this time he simply pushed her behind the sacks that stood beside the bagging shutes, and then flung the door open for Badger Clarke.

Badger was a podgy young man, podgy-faced; it was the smell of his father's cellar, and maybe more than the smell of it, that made his cheeks so saggingly fleshy; he had calm lacklustre eyes, a single barb of beard, and a fancy waistcoat.

"Well, now!" said young Joe. "And what brought you here, Badger Clarke?"

"We—ll," said Badger Clarke, in the fine drawl he'd spent so much time in acquiring, "the fact is, a little bird told me something. Actually a damn great bird with a clay pipe in its mouth; old Rags, the hedger."

"There's a man as 'ud make all the trouble in the world," said Tiny Tarbet, "for a pint of porter. But we have a way with trouble in this here mill. I mind the time . . ."

"Yuus," said Badger. "But you needn't really bother to tell me about the time you tied those six men to the sails, my good man, because everybody knows about that—except the six men, of course. The fact is, Rawlins—well, not to put too fine a point on it, did a young lady friend of mine come here a little while ago? Because old Rags will have it that she did and . . ."

"Mercy, now!" said Joe. "What would the fine ladies you honour with your company do in a place like this? Don't you know better than to believe old Rags?"

"She isn't here, then, eh?"

"If she is," said Joe, with conviction, "then it's a plain miracle where—because I've just been over this mill, within the last hour, from top to bottom, looking for something as was lost, and there wasn't a soul to be seen except Tiny here, upon my honour."

"Ah we—ll," said Badger, turning to go, "I suppose old

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rogue Rags had a firkin of stingo in his eye; but it don't do to leave the lady one's engaged to entirely out of mind, so it's as well I asked. Call them mine, next time you take a pot at the inn."

"Now that's handsome, Mr. Clarke!" said young Joe. "And handsome is what I'll wager the lady is, too. But engaged, eh—fiancés and what-all?—Damme, but I never thought they'd tie Badger Clarke hand and foot, that dashing young king of post-chaises! Would it be Farmer Straw's Anne now? Or maybe, that young French miss that curls the ladies' hair at Latch Hall?"

"What—Toinette?" said Badger, with a wide and worldly leer. "Ah—there is *something*; 'tis a thing women take better care with in La Belle France, Rawlins; you should go and see. *L'Armour!*—Why, they're passionate as gunpowder, man."

"Ah! So it's Toinette, then?"

"We—ll, no," said Badger. "On consideration, Rawlins, no. The fact is, d'ye see, she wouldn't do at the Falcon. No, to be plain with you, we want a good Kentish cob there, ye see; works hard and wears as well as most, with a practical eye to the business, and the sort that can be free with the custom without their being free with her. Oh, there's more to marrying, in the way of business, than passion, Rawlins; though maybe that don't apply so much to millers, if you ever have a leaning to have someone darn your socks for you. But then man, I've seen the world and I know; a wife for the business, d'ye see, and Toinette for the things that ain't business—best of both worlds, that's all that's good enough for Henry Clarke."

"A wonderful thing, like enough, to know all that much about the world, now," said young Joe. "So it weren't to be Toinette then—it's the Kentish cob?"

"We—ll, a city-bred one," said Badger. "And one that'd pass for thoroughbred, when she knows how to snub servants. But a worker—aye, you can see the grit there, and 'tis what I chose her for more than anything other."

"But you're mighty free with your tongue, Mr. Clarke," suggested Tiny Tarbet, "to tell us this much."

"Oh—bah," said Badger. "Tell who you like; it will pass for lies—with *her* it would, leastways. I am King Henry there, I do assure you, and the King can do no wrong."

"Well, that's jolly for all sakes," said young Joe. "But the name, man? Or is it more than you dare tell us, after so much? If it's not Toinette from Latch Hall, or Farmer Straw's Anne, who then?"

"We—ll," said Clarke, "you can have the name too for all I care—'tis Molly Lucas from Fitznorton Hugh—that's who it is."

"It is *not*, then!" cried Molly, leaping in a swirl of wheat dust

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from out of her corner; not tearfully, but with a great rage burning out of her face so violently that it shook Badger out of his fashionable languor and scorched him a half pace backward.

"My God—Molly!"

"Aye," she said. "Molly is right, but never Molly Clarke! Gunpowder!" she cried. "Kentish cobs don't have their ears full of gunpowder; maybe not; but, God save us, they can kick!"

And she boxed his ears, and the sound was like a pistol shot.

"Rawlins!" screamed Badger Clarke, his face flaming red with rage and that confusing hand. "This is your work. *You* did this, and by God, you'll answer for it!"

Tiny Tarbet was leaning back against the bin, chalk white, for nothing took the marrow out of his great bones like violence; it always made him tremble.

"You planned this, Rawlins," Clarke shouted, "you and that cunning trollop—and I tell you, I'll see you answer for it, damn you!"

"Yes, I'll answer for it," young Joe answered, "and I'll answer for something more, as well—I'll answer for ladies as can't rightly answer for themselves, being ladies."

He began to move towards the man.

"You asked for this!" roared Badger Clarke, and struck with every ounce he had. And of course, the harder you strike the more of a surprise it is to you if you hit nothing; which was exactly what Badger Clarke was made to do by a slight tilt of young Joe's head. Clarke swung himself half off his feet, and young Joe stuck out two hands; one took Badger's left wrist, and whipped it round, and you could see it was painful, behind his back; the other clenched on to the scruff of his neck, and in this position young Joe held him a moment at the open door, at the top of the long flight of wooden steps.

"You'd best be going, lad," he said. "I wouldn't like Tiny to string you up to the sails. But take partickler care of those steps," said young Joe, "it'd astonish you how many people just get careless and go down on their ears and noses."

With that he gave the struggling man a push and a twist, and there came a clatter of bumps and groans and oaths.

"There—I *told* you!" said young Joe.

Badger didn't climb the steps again; "By God, you'll pay for this!" he shouted, and shook his fist, and made off, sniffing back the blood that dripped from his nose.

"Oh, thank you!" cried Molly Lucas. "*Thank you!* Oh, the brute, the beast!"

Young Joe didn't smile at her. His face was stern.

"'Tis a damnable thing the trouble women make," he said, "because they can't tell gilt from gold—and what of your father?"

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"Oh, my poor father!" she cried, and her eyes glistened a little now. "How I've treated him! And he'll be searching everywhere for me!"

Young Joe opened the door and looked out. It was velvet night now, and there were no stars in the cloudy sky, but only a few gleaming down here and there from the village windows, and two blazing rows from Latch Hall across the valley. The wind had steadied and the mill sails beat steadily round, and from the bins above his head the corn ran steadily through to the stones, and the meal flowed steadily from the stones to other bins; mills did not stop for sundown, when the weather was right, and there was full thirty shillings' worth of wind between now and morning.

But he reached for the brake handle.

"We'll waste the wind, Tiny," he said. "I'll take Miss Lucas to the mill house, and my sister can clean the dust off her with hot tea. Now do you go and find her father—in Fitznorton Hugh or wherever—and tell him where she is."

"Aye," said Tiny. "I'll do that, then."

"And listen," said young Joe, "tell him this, too. Say Miss Lucas had the mischance to slip on that board bridge over the gully by the Church; it's a place as breaks more ankles than the Mount Blank itself. And say my sister just had her in to the mill house to rest—ye see, Tiny? And never a word of Badger Clarke."

"A nod," said Tiny, "is as good as a crack over the head with a pick-axe."

"Oh miller," cried Molly, "you think of everything!"

"Ah," said young Joe, "but you don't know the half of what I've thought of, miss—and that's the truth."

But she came to know, later on, what he'd thought of; and not three months after, they hung ribbons on the sails of Thorverton Mill, and garlands over the porch. It was just after the Clarkes had sold up the Falcon (deep in debt, it was said) and moved out of town.

"But it wasn't the debts as drove 'em out," said Tiny Tarbet to the new landlord that bright day. "Not by a yard of rope! But after we'd wrapped young Badger on the shutters, and sent him round with the sails, sixty mile an hour, till his teeth fell out like pebbles . . . well, it frightened 'em like."

It frightened the new landlord too, at first, but he came to know Tiny better, as time went on.

* * *

A professor is one who talks in someone else's sleep.

W. H. AUDEN

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★*Fact can be stranger than fiction! The year was* 1899 *: the place, a lonely farm in the Essex marsh : the fact— a cold-blooded murder, of which an authentic contemporary account is given here.*

MYSTERY OF THE MOATED FARM

by C. J. and ANNIE O. TIBBITS

IT caught her as a strong current catches a poor swimmer. It swept her off her feet, and filled her life with the romance of which she had dreamed. Every now and then, like a swimmer sensing danger, she made an effort to draw back before it was too late ; but somehow he was always there with his alluring smile, his queer eyes, his odd attractive ways.

How long was it since she had awakened to the first thrill of it ? How long since she had given him her promise ? A day ? A month ? A year ? It seemed at times like all three.

She sat with the little pointed toes of her shoes toasting on the hearth. It was a bitter, grey day outside, and the rosy glow of the fire about the room was cheerful, making the brass kerb and fire-irons wink in the light, as if they knew. On the mantelpiece a clock with a silver face was ticking like a thing in a panic.

The usually tidy room had an air of confusion. Furniture had been moved, ornaments put away. On the floor stood a dressing-case, shut and locked, and a hat and coat lay on a chair beside it.

Somebody was going away. Somebody was leaving the old familiar life for something new and strange—and unbelievable. Even yet Camille could scarcely realize that it was she, though the voice in her ears and in her heart was real, peremptory.

" Victoria at six. Under the clock. Have the tickets ready."

" Yes. Everything you want. Just everything you want."

There was a smile on her face as she stared into the fire ; but it changed to an expression almost of alarm as a voice broke the silence, and a woman entered, dragging several dogs on leads. She leapt across the room and dropped into a chair.

" Camille ! " she cried. " Why didn't you tell me you were going off like this ? You really are cracked, travelling about as you do. One of these days you will get held up by brigands, and some

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of us will have to empty our pockets for your ransom. Where are you off to now? But I know already—Paris! And why ever?"

In Camille's eyes was a light her friend could not understand.

"I—I can't say. I am tired of London just now, and want to get away. Oh, yes, I am longing to get away."

She turned her face away from the questioning of the other's eyes.

"And you won't even stay for Blanche's concert? Well, you must have been born cruel. She was simply swelling with pride because you had promised to play. *Can't* you stay for the concert?"

"No, I can't. The man is coming now, this afternoon, to take charge of the house, and they are taking away the furniture to be stored. I—I must go."

She was aware that the other was searching her face, and added hurriedly: "I am not well—that's the truth, Fanny. London is choking me. I'm longing for the country and fresh air."

"Gracious! I didn't know you called Paris the country."

"I'm not going to Paris. I—I'm going into the country first, at any rate. Don't ask me questions. I must be quiet for a bit."

There was a moment's silence, during which her friend stared in open surprise.

"Well, all I can say is that you must be on the verge of brain fever. And, really, now I look at you, you are like a ghost, Camille. Are you going tomorrow?"

"No, today."

"Gracious! Then it's a good thing I came in. I nearly didn't—I'm in a hurry, and I must go now. Take care of yourself, Camille."

She departed in a confusion of dogs and leather leads. Camille felt as if somebody had caught her up out of her sleep, whirled her round and left her breathless. Then the insistent clock, its fingers hurrying round its silver face, warned her that only a short space of time lay between her and her new life.

She put on her hat and coat, looking anxiously at her face in the glass. It was quite true, she did look a little pale. But her colour would revive at Victoria. She would be pink as a girl then.

Camille was still before the mirror when a maid, ready to leave, came to tell her that the man who was superintending the storing of her furniture was waiting to see her.

With a last look round, she crossed the room and closed the door. She was closing it upon all the past years of her life.

Camille waited at Victoria in a golden dusk, for the grey day was ending in a burst of stormy sunshine. For her this baleful light, reflected in her eyes, was full of hope and promise.

For perhaps half an hour she sat there, scanning the crowds

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hurrying by. The bench on which she sat filled and emptied a dozen times before she saw him coming through the crowd at last.

He and she made a strange contrast. Camille Holland, with her stylish air, distinction in the set of her clothes, in the bag she carried, in her high-heeled, shining shoes, belonged to a different world from the man who greeted her.

He was tall, with handsome features and a fresh complexion, a heavy moustache and pointed beard streaked with grey. He was smartly dressed in a grey reefer suit, yet he looked a man in a subordinate position—not a man belonging to Camille Holland's world. As he took her arm and piloted her across the station, however, he had the air of a man in authority. Camille's friends would have been surprised if they had seen her now, smiling, radiant, confident in the man she loved.

Dougal undoubtedly had a way with him—a way that had spelt disaster for more than one woman—but who could account for his fascination for Camille Holland? Many women have had strange infatuations, but never was a stranger than the infatuation of Camille Holland for the man whom she had secretly married.

She went with him without a qualm. Hassocks was their first stopping place—a little village in the heart of the country. There for weeks her romance held. Herbert Samuel Dougal showed no sign of the evil that lay behind his strange eyes. They were eyes that never smiled—cold, grey, like lifeless stones—and they could gleam with rage and hate while the rest of his face remained calm.

Yet at Hassocks and at Saffron Walden, where they removed later, Camille had nothing to fear. For her this was a time of peace. She knew little of the life of villages. Maida Vale, the shopping, musical, and theatrical centres of London, visits to fashionable hotels in fashionable French and Italian watering places had made up her life. She had written novels, had sung at St. James's Hall. This was like a new world, full of new sights, new emotions; and her only wish was that Dougal would not tire too soon.

It was when they were at Saffron Walden that he first suggested a house of their own—a farm where he could work and become independent of her money; a home that should be their castle.

Dougal had heard of a farm—the very place, it seemed, where he could set to work and prosper; and the price was not too much for her to find for him. How good she was!

"Let's go and see the place," he said. "I've heard that it is to be had cheap, and I believe I could make it into a good property. Let's go, Camille."

She was a little tired when they got there at last, and perhaps that accounted for her feeling of vague depression at the first sight of the place. At Stanstead Station the flat country had a cold look,

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in spite of the gleam of sunshine in the winter sky. The promise of spring was visible in the hedges as they neared the place known as Coldham's farm. They turned in at the straggling carriage-way. The house stood back from the road—three-storeyed at the front, but with the roof sloping to a single storey at the back.

Camille stared at it doubtfully as they went along the carriage-way, and, crossing the two moats that surrounded it, reached the tiny lawn, shadowed by firs.

"Oh, I don't like the look of this," she said, shivering a little. "I shall never be happy here."

Dougal put his hand on her arm.

"You shan't live here, if you don't like it," he said. "But I want you to see it. I think if you do you'll take to it. Come and look at it."

"It's like a prison," whispered Camille.

"No, no, nothing of the sort," said Dougal. "This house was built centuries ago, when the flat country round here was full of foes, and the moats were put there as a protection. Why, think how snug we can make ourselves! Come and look. I hope you'll like it, but if you don't you shan't live here."

Camille Holland entered the house which was to be her tomb, passed with the confidence of love into the hall. She looked into Dougal's face and was lost. Whatever prejudice she had had against the place vanished at his words and his apparent anxiety to work for her, to make a success of the farm, to turn the old house into something of a castle, with Camille there as mistress and queen.

There came for her a period of bustle and excitement. People who saw her superintending the papering and painting, found that it was done in the newest London fashion, and with no money spared.

"She knows how things are up in London. You may be sure she's lived in grand houses. There's style about her," the country folk said.

There was "style" about her furniture, too. The country people stood gaping as it emerged from the huge vans—the grand piano that was such a trouble to get in, the mirrors and tables, pictures and ornaments.

It seemed a lot of furniture for a small house, and for Coldham's Farm, too; but it was to be Coldham's Farm no longer. The thick creamy-white note-paper which the Dougals used was headed "The Moat Farm," which for most people made it a castle at once.

A castle gloomy as a prison!

April was going out in a blaze of blossom. Dougal was busy all day clearing ditches, seeing that the work on his two hundred and

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fifty acres was fairly started; and in the house, surrounded by moats and reeds, with its fir-trees dangling their branches like loose, dark hands about it, Camille was arranging and re-arranging her knick-knacks.

But now her spirits seemed to flag. The loneliness began to tell on her, and she waited with impatience for the arrival of the maid she had engaged, longing even for her company now that Dougal was so changed and so busy.

For in a few days he had changed completely, and now, when he was at home, he shut himself up in his work-room, alone.

A fortnight later, when the maid, Florence Harris, arrived, she was startled by something about the house she could not define. It was not the trees, nor the reeds, nor the dead level of the country around. It was something in the house itself—something sinister that you felt in the air you breathed, that hid in the shadows, that cried aloud in the music that Camille played all alone in her beautiful drawing-room.

Dougal himself lurked like a shadow about the house, but mostly he was shut up in his room, locked against Camille, deaf to her reproaches and her tears.

And now she was always crying, breaking down over the melancholy music she played, then stealing upstairs to dry her eyes. The Moat Farm, like a sinister shade, had crept in between her and Dougal, and had withered her romance as a frost withers a flower.

"I can't bear it," she cried. "What have I done? Let us go back to Hassocks, and be as we were there."

Brutal and callous, he mocked at her now. Something in his manner, his voice, but above all his eyes, shook Camille into a terrified silence.

She crept away to the kitchen, to Harris, the little servant girl—the only creature, it seemed, to whom she could turn for comfort in the mysterious, indefinite tragedy that had fallen upon her.

She seemed afraid now to be alone except when she was at her piano. Music, once a passion of her life, was a sort of refuge. But only sad and melancholy music came to her touch. Once or twice she tried to sing, but her voice had grown faint and old, and she gave it up.

May came in bleak and cold and unfriendly, and the brilliant days were treacherous, drawing you with warm fingers in the afternoons to stab you with little knives of cold and damp and frost as the sun went down.

It was an evil month, this May of 1899, as treacherous as love to Camille Holland. And there was treachery now in the very air of the Moat Farm. Harris, in her kitchen, wished she had never

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seen the place, and wrote to her mother about her fear of it. Dougal spent nearly all his time now in his room, and Camille sat alone with her piano.

Day after day this went on, the weeping woman like a ghost about the house, haunted by her own sorrow, until the evening of May 18th.

Dusk had fallen before Dougal came in that night, and Harris saw him and Camille standing like a pair of shadows in the hall together. What he said she did not hear, but a little while afterwards Camille crept into the kitchen with the make-up standing in ugly patches upon her cheeks.

Harris felt a thrill of anger and fear at the sight of her. Dougal was a brute, for all his pleasant manner and genial ways, to treat her as he did.

"He is in a wicked mood," Camille said. "I—I—would you mind if I slept with you as I did before?"

"No, mum, no!" said Harris eagerly.

She would be glad of it as she had been before when Camille, afraid of Dougal, had crept up and shared her bed.

"You would think he had grown to hate me," she said, in a low voice. "Oh, I don't know what to do! But perhaps it is my fault—"

It was on the tip of Harris's tongue to tell her that, in spite of his moods, Dougal must be fond of her. Had he not been writing her name over and over again—her maiden name—in his room, "Camille—Camille—Camille C. Holland?" She had seen the paper on the table where he had left it, and if it did not mean that he was still in love with her, what did it mean? People in love, everyone knew, were fond of writing each other's names to see how they looked.

Camille tried to throw off her depression, and for some time remained in the kitchen, talking, reviving old memories, telling the little maid of places she had seen, of the life she had led.

That night Harris went to bed restless and sleepless. They kept early hours in this Essex countryside, and it had only just struck nine as she closed her bedroom door; but outside the country lay black as midnight with clouds that obscured the moon, and threw shadows over the flat fields, turning to moving spectres the black masses of elders and willows that surrounded the house, and making the waters of the moat hideous. The hedges and bushes that lined their banks made an uncanny rustling; they seemed a sort of undertone to Camille's music—a weird, uncanny chorus that filled the silences.

She played her piano for a long time that night, and Harris was haunted by her mistress's face. The music ceased abruptly.

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Camille remained downstairs quite alone, and Harris lay trembling, listening.

The old house sank into a silence broken only by the whispering of the reeds. Even Harris fell asleep at last.

The next day Camille was even more depressed than usual. Pale and ghostlike, she drifted about the house. Once Harris found her crying bitterly at the foot of the stairs, and then, as if making up her mind to some sudden decision, she ran up and disappeared.

Towards evening Harris, turning abruptly, saw her standing in the doorway dressed as if to go out. Her face was a little brighter, and she was smartly dressed.

"Good-bye, Florrie," she said. "I shan't be long."

Following her to the door, Florrie saw that Dougal waited outside with the pony and trap. It seemed as if he were going to do a kind action at last, and take Camille for a drive on this beautiful May evening.

Dougal returned alone. He entered the house with the air of a man at ease with himself, though his eyes took a sharp glance at Harris's face as she came forward and asked where Mrs. Dougal was.

"Gone to London," said Dougal shortly. "I drove her to Stanstead Station, and I'm going to meet her there later on. She won't be long."

But Camille was very late, so late that Dougal seemed unable to rest. He was at the station and back again constantly during the evening, as if she had not told him by what train she would return. The night wore on. Twelve o'clock struck, and once more Dougal set off.

He came back at a quarter to one—alone. Camille had not returned.

Terror filled Harris's heart afresh that night, terror aggravated by the fear that some ugly thing had overtaken her mistress, terror of Dougal, of the night, of the house that now seemed peopled with ghosts.

She slept fitfully and woke early next morning, filled with the same indescribable fear.

She went down trembling at seven o'clock to find that Dougal was up before her. He had even prepared his breakfast.

"I've had a letter from my wife," he informed the girl, "and she is staying in London for a bit, and is sending a friend to look after us until she comes back."

It sounded plausible, but Harris did not like it, and she was glad when her mother appeared and took her home. She disappeared from the farm, thankful to escape, and Dougal was left alone.

That day passed and many others. Weeks grew into months

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and years, and Camille never came back. But the Dougals had been so little known in the district that she was not seriously missed by the people of either Clavering or Rickling, the villages between which the Moat Farm was situated. Dougal, wrapped up in his own society, never sought any other, and no one questioned him. Nevertheless, sinister rumours began to get abroad, and there were people who wondered and talked. New servants came and went—and talked. There were stories of business letters coming to the farm still addressed to Camille C. Holland, for Dougal had told her to keep her marriage secret from her friends and bankers.

Nearly four years passed before the floating rumours and suspicions took shape in the person of Police-Superintendent Pryke. He came to pay Dougal a visit on behalf of some people in London who had not forgotten Camille, and who wanted to know why she never wrote to her old friends, though she could attend regularly to her business letters.

The superintendent entered the house with the air of a man wanting a chat, and Dougal took him into the room where, nearly four years ago, he had written over and over again the name of the woman who loved him on that piece of paper Harris had discovered.

"I've come to make inquiries about Mrs. Dougal," the superintendent said. "You must know that there are strange stories about—it is said she is kept hidden in this house."

Dougal laughed harshly. "Absurd!" he exclaimed.

"Perhaps you wouldn't mind my having a look round?" asked the Superintendent.

"Not the slightest. Look wherever you like," said Dougal.

There was no trace of her in the house, and when the search was over Dougal explained why.

It was simple enough. Over three years ago he and his wife had had a quarrel, and she had resolved to leave him. He had driven her one evening to Stanstead Station; she had left for London, and since then he had never seen or heard of her.

"But it is said that you have been making free with her money since she left?" said Pryke.

Dougal protested that he knew nothing of her affairs; and that he had never touched any money of hers. His manner was so genial and frank it was hard to disbelieve him.

But Camille's relatives and friends were not so certain. They put the matter into the hands of a detective named Marden, who traced her from the time she left London to the time she disappeared from the Moat Farm. After that there was no trace of her, and yet the Piccadilly branch of the National and Provincial Bank, where she had some thousands of pounds to her credit, received regularly her receipts for the dividends they remitted to her.

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Her relatives resolved to investigate the mystery. Detective Marden discovered some curious things. The bank officials remembered a strange irregularity in the signature which had been apparent immediately after the date of her disappearance. They had even returned the cheque for an explanation, and a reply came to the effect that she had sprained her hand, and that, as a consequence, her handwriting might vary a little for a time.

The bank had accepted that and the cheques which were subsequently presented, but now Gurrin, the celebrated handwriting expert, declared that the signatures were forgeries. The bank had parted with some six thousand pounds to a thief.

Detectives were now set to watch the Moat Farm, but Dougal evaded their vigilance and disappeared.

A few days afterwards a heavily bearded man presented some notes to be changed at the Bank of England. There were fourteen notes of ten pounds each. The cashier eyed him sharply.

"Nine of these notes have been stopped," he said. "What is your name and address?"

A moment's hesitation, and then upon a piece of paper he wrote:

"Sydney Domville, Upper Terrace, Bournemouth."

That very instant the law laid its hands upon him. Detective Scott, who had recently been called in, stood between him and the door, and there and then arrested him for forgery. When searched there was found on him no less than five thousand pounds in notes. At his lodging the detective discovered five gold watches, some rings and other jewellery, amongst it a jewelled cross which was one of Camille Holland's most treasured possessions.

It was the beginning of the end for Herbert Samuel Dougal. A darker suspicion than that of forgery attached to him. On the very day of his arrest detectives appeared at the Moat Farm. They at once began to search the place for some trace of the unhappy woman. Every nook and cranny, almost every brick in the house was examined, but there was nothing to betray the man who waited in prison, smiling at the futility of the search.

The search took weeks. After the house they turned their attentions to the ground outside, and to the waters of the moat. Labourers were put to work. They probed and dragged and dug. The moat was run dry and the deep mud searched. Day after day the digging went on. The empty moat revealed nothing; the ground about the house revealed nothing. Every inch of it was probed and picked by the workers, and still Dougal smiled mockingly.

"I'll find her," the Chief of Police declared, "if I have to dig the whole two hundred and fifty acres."

Then a labourer turned up, applying for work. "I know something of the farm," he said. "I worked on it four years ago."

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"What did you do?" asked the chief officer.

"I filled up a ditch—funny bit of business, too, for it looked to me a mistake—like filling in a drain."

"Show me the ditch," said the officer.

The man led the way. The ditch was overgrown with grass now and thick with ash and elder trees which Dougal had planted there. The change Dougal had made would have puzzled a farmer, for it resulted in the flooding of the surrounding land in winter; but it did not puzzle the police.

They set to work at once. At last the light of day shone upon the dead body of a woman with a bullet wound behind the right ear.

Camille Holland lay with the mud upon her, with her clothes, still wonderfully preserved, clinging about her, her hat, now only a skeleton of wirework, still held by pins to her thick yellow hair, and with her shoes still in such remarkable preservation that the shoemaker who made them was afterwards able to identify them.

Dougal smiled no more in his cell. The evidence was clear. It was a cruel, deliberate crime, planned by a mind of horrible cunning. His life, perhaps, had always been cruel. Certainly it had always been unscrupulous. He had committed other crimes. Years ago, when in the army, he had been convicted of forgery. Once he had been tried for arson, but acquitted; afterwards he had taken to a life of fraud, taking advantage of his handsome appearance and insinuating manners, finding women his most profitable victims.

But the bitterness of the death penalty was perhaps all the more bitter because of his knowledge that if he had been true to Camille she would not have failed him, that he had killed the woman who would have made life easy for him and taken advantage of her unhappy infatuation to his own undoing.

Camille had her revenge. It seemed as if her little, sad ghost passed out with him and followed him to his death.

* * *

"*SUMMER PIE*".

Summer Pie, that lively summer annual of pre-war days, is on the bookstalls again. The 1952 edition contains 96 pages of light-hearted holiday reading, including short stories by Victor Canning, J. B. Morton ("Beachcomber"), Cledwyn Hughes and Rowan Ayers. The magazine, which sells at 1s. 6d., is handsomely illustrated by well-known artists, photographers and cartoonists. The proceeds go to the National Advertising Benevolent Society.

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PARISIAN SPRING

There was always, you understand, *un peu de panache* — glamour — as you might call it

by JUDY FALLON

OF all the strange and colourful figures that the tropic kaleidoscope threw in front of our eyes during our stay in the island —none was so impressive as *M'sieu* Nikki.

No one who had met the famous *M'sieu* Nikki of New Caledonia could ever forget him. He was known the length and breadth of the South Seas, and it was his boast that letters addressed " *Monsieur* Nikki, *La Pacifique*," reached him without difficulty.

He was a tall man for a Frenchman, heavily built, with a big head on thick shoulders. His tiny bright currant eyes twinkled above his broad cheeks, and a trim grey beard and a waxed moustache gave him the look of a comfortable French bourgeois.

But *M'sieu* Nikki was far more than that. His little eyes would sparkle like agates as he told of his early exploits as a trader in the islands, sailing through the treacherous coral reefs in his schooner with its native crew, amassing for himself the enormous wealth which was a byword in the Pacific by the time I knew him.

I had seen him several times in Australia, and had heard his booming laugh ringing across a crowded restaurant in Sydney, and I had asked his name from the head waiter. *M'sieu* Nikki was never lost in a crowd anywhere—always there would be someone asking who he was.

I met him for the first time in New Caledonia, at a party at the American consulate.

" But of course you know *M'sieu* Nikki—everyone knows *M'sieu* Nikki," had been my host's introduction, and *M'sieu* Nikki had bowed gravely. He accepted the deference of those around him as a king might—but he was a cynical worldly king, who paid not too much notice to the fulsomeness of his subjects. His eyes seemed to say, " Oh yes, they bow to me now—but I remember a time—" and you knew he was thinking of those wild days on the schooner, when *M'sieu* Nikki was not yet *M'sieu* Nikki, but only a laughing youngster with adventure in his heart.

He bowed over my hand with the grace of an eighteenth-century gallant, and then led me to the edge of the balcony and began speaking in his flawless, almost accentless English.

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He spoke of his admiration for the British, and then led gently on to his admiration of British women, until imperceptibly I found myself receiving the kind of compliments no woman can resist—the kind of compliments a cultured Frenchman knows so well how to pay.

They speak of your intelligence, your sensitivity, your wit—with no mention of the simpler physical attributes which a less subtle race would take as the basis for their compliments. *M'sieu* Nikki made no mention of such things, but as he paid me soft compliments on my character and intelligence, his eyes held mine, and seemed to say, " You have all this "—here a most comprehensive glance that swept me from head to toe—" and yet *Madame* has a mind too."

I basked in it, as one always does, but I smiled amusedly, and immediately *M'sieu* Nikki caught the flavour of my smile, and stopped speaking, with his big head cocked on one side. He laughed his great echoing laugh, then took my hand again and kissed it.

" So you are indeed intelligent, *Madame*," he said, " and you find perhaps that I am a little pompous and old-fashioned ? "

" No, *M'sieu* Nikki, of course I do not. It seems now to be one of the things we have lost in our world today, and we women regret it. If only men would realize it, *M'sieu* Nikki, that if you treat a woman as you do—she becomes very close to the picture you paint of her."

M'sieu Nikki was silent for a while. He was looking out across the bay, coloured now to a Gauguin pink as the sun sank down in a tumble of blazing cloud.

After some time he spoke again, lapsing into his native Parisian French.

" I am an old man, *Madame*, and old men are permitted to talk of things that would perhaps not become a young man. I have seen many things in my life, and I have seen many changes. And those changes, *Madame*, they are not good."

He sighed and continued :

" I have never been, as you say in English, a prude. I have enjoyed myself, and "—here a little smile lifted the waxed ends of his moustache—" I think I have given enjoyment."

" I have loved women, *chère madame*, simply because I feel that *le Bon Dieu* meant them to be loved. I have loved many women, many types of women . . . . But then, there was always, you understand, *un peu de panache*, glamour, as you might call it, or *élégance*. Yes, *élégance*, *chère madame*. And now, as an old man, with these adventures of the blood far behind me, with only memories of what

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I have been, I can look on your generation and your life, with the disinterested eyes of a spectator. And to me it is of great sadness that your lives no longer have the elegance, the graciousness, that I remember in my own. You miss so much, dear lady, and I—I miss it too, merely as an old man in the sunset of my life."

He sighed again.

"You will forgive me perhaps for boring you, but tonight I feel memories crowding upon me. I remember when I was a young man in Paris—*Madame*, can you feel the romance in those words? To be a young man in Paris—ah, that is to be king of the world. In my Paris, that is, in the days of the cafés and the artists, those artists who painted because if they did not they felt they had no existence—only through their canvases could they live, and they starved, they went mad, they died because of their painting . . . But to return . . .

"I was a young man in Paris, *chère madame*, and the world belonged to me. I remember this particular morning I dressed with care, and I set out into the mild spring sunshine singing a little song—to be sure, *Madame*, the song was perhaps a little ribald, but I sang it so softly, you understand.

"I walked down the *boulevards*, and I found myself a seat at a café.

"I stretched my legs in the sunshine and sipped my Pernod, and thought myself a very devil of a fellow. I stared at the women as they passed—but admiringly, you understand, with a little compliment in my eyes for each one.

"Then I saw a very beautiful girl approaching. She was dressed in high fashion, and she wore a great bunch of Parma violets at her bosom. The eyes of a Frenchman, *Madame*, are very wise in the way of women, and I knew although her appearance and her dress gave no indication, that *Mademoiselle* was, as we say *une demi-mondaine*.

"She passed by, and the scent of her violets clung in my nostrils. I rose and followed her, and very soon she stopped and turned. She was very lovely, with those dark velvet eyes that Marie Laurencin paints so well.

"We walked for several minutes in the bright sunshine, then I suggested that perhaps—perhaps *Mademoiselle* had a small apartment? She smiled and led me to a house in a small street.

"I was young, you see, and when one is young one likes to play jokes. So at the door I stopped.

"'But, *Mademoiselle*,' I told her, 'I have only fifty francs.'

"Fifty francs in those days were certainly more than these scraps of paper we use as francs today, but it was insulting even so.

"But I smiled at *Mademoiselle*, and *Mademoiselle* smiled back.

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" When we came out, I noticed that the girl gave thirty francs to an old crone sitting in the dark hall-way of the house. Then we stepped out again into the sunshine and we walked together back to the *boulevard*.

" ' *Chère amie*,' I said, ' let us now have a glass of wine and a sandwich.'

" ' But, *M'sieu*, you told me you had only fifty francs ? '

" ' Indeed, it is true that I have no money, but you, *Mademoiselle*, I know that you have still twenty francs.'

" She looked at me indignantly, then those Laurencin eyes melted into smiles.

" ' *Mais certainement*,' she said demurely, and we sat down at one of the tables on the foot-path, and we enjoyed our simple meal.

" Then I suggested to her, that while I had no money, I did have a bottle of champagne at my apartment, and perhaps *Mademoiselle* would care to share it with me ?

" *Mademoiselle* would, and so we went to my *atelier*, and there we scrupulously shared the bottle . . .

" Next morning, I rose early, and, taking care not to wake her, I took her handbag, and right at the bottom of her purse, where she would not find it immediately, I placed two notes of a large denomination. For, you see, I did not wish to carry my little joke too far.

" Then I let myself out quietly, and said to the concierge that *Mademoiselle* was a friend of mine and was not to be disturbed.

" That evening when I returned, *le concierge* met me at the door.

" He was concerned, he said, because after *Mademoiselle* had left, several hours later she returned in great agitation and implored him to let her revisit my apartment.

Because I had left the message about her, he felt it was not wrong to do so. He hoped that *M'sieu* was not angry, but *Mademoiselle* was so pretty, *enfin* . . .

" I hurried up to my apartment and opened the door. There I saw that the whole place was filled with flowers, but flowers of a magnificence.

" Flowers are always expensive in Paris, but these, *Madame*, these had cost, I knew, every sou of the sum I had placed in *Mademoiselle's* purse.

" Under the largest bowl, there was á note for me.

" ' *Cher Monsieur*,' I read, ' Courtesy bids me thank you for your so generous gift, but I cannot accept it. For last night, I was very happy—and now you have spoilt it all.' "

After a pause, he said : " I have never forgotten the lesson she taught me."

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M'sieu Nikki smiled down at me from his great height, gently. Then, slipping back into the easy tenor of our first conversation, he asked me smoothly if I was familiar with French poetry, and then in his deep voice he began that wonderful lament of François Villon for the dead beauties : " *Où sont les neiges d'antan ?* "

And where, indeed, *cher M'sieu* Nikki, are the snows of yesteryear, now that you, too, have gone to join those lost beauties of the past you mourned with me, that brilliant tropic evening in the Pacific ?

* * *

ANSWERS to GREEN FINGERS on page 12

1. *The garden of the cottage at Allways in the novel, " Down the Garden Path," by Beverley Nichols.*
2. *The garden in Xanadu described in the poem " Kubla Khan," by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.*
3. *The Garden of Eden, in the Book of Genesis.*
4. *England, in the poem " The Glory of the Garden," by Rudyard Kipling.*
5. *The garden belonging to the Sheridans, in the short story, " The Garden-Party," by Katherine Mansfield.*
6. *The garden which was made on the island, " New Switzerland," by the Swiss Family Robinson in the book of that name by J. R. Wyss.*
7. *The hidden garden of Misselthwaite Manor, in " The Secret Garden," by Frances Hodgson-Burnett.*
8. *Leonato's garden, in " Much Ado About Nothing," by William Shakespeare.*

SOLUTION to ARGOSY CROSSWORD on page 144

Across. 1, Bracing. 5, Love all. 9, Billiards player. 10, Lake. 11, Tacit. 12, Moan. 15, Stature. 16, Glitter. 17, Extract. 19, Facings. 21, Root. 22, Liver. 23, Oslo. 26, The back of beyond. 27, Cascade. 28, Liftman.

Down. 1, Bubbles. 2, As like as two peas. 3, Isis. 4, Germane. 5, Lasting. 6, Vale. 7, Any port in a storm. 8, Loriner. 13, Ducal. 14, Finch. 17, Erratic. 18, Trickle. 19, Fretful. 20, Snowdon. 24, Bala. 25, Self.

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LOVE-LYRIC

Who shall have my fayre lady?
Who but I, who but I, who but I?

Author Unknown

It is the hardest thing in the world to be in love, and attend businesse. As for me, all who speake to me find me out, and I must lock myself up, or other people will do it for me . . .

SIR RICHARD STEELE,
from a letter to Mary Scurlock, later his wife

Love-sight

When do I see thee most, beloved one?
When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
The worship of that love thro' thee made known?
Or when, in the dark hours (we two alone),
Close-kiss'd, and eloquent of still replies
Thy twilight hidden glimmering visage lies,
And my soul only sees thy soul its own?

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Nocturne

The house was empty. Hope's aunt and uncle had taken their two small children on a three-day holiday to the country, and an almost exotic air of peace hung over the dark rooms.

"You hungry?" Hope asked dourly. She was standing in the middle of the living-room and Noah had thought he would kiss her, until he saw the expression on her face . . .

He followed her meekly into the kitchen and helped as unobtrusively as possible. She got out some cold chicken, a jug full of milk and made a salad. She put everything on a tray and said, curtly, "Outside," like a sergeant commanding a platoon.

He took the tray out to the back garden, a twilit oblong now, that was bounded on two sides by a high board fence, and on the far end by the blank brick wall of a garage that had Virginia creeper growing all over it. There was a graceful acacia tree shading the garden. Hope's uncle had a small rock garden at one end and beds of common

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flowers, and there was a wood table with shielded candles and a long, sofa-like swing with a canopy . . .

Hope lit the candles and they sat gravely opposite each other, eating hungrily. They hardly spoke while they ate, just polite requests for the salt and the milk. They folded their napkins and stood up on opposite sides of the table.

" We don't need the candles," Hope said. " Will you please blow out the one on your side ? "

He leaned over the small glass chimney that guarded the candle and Hope bent over the one on her side of the table. Their heads touched as they blew, together, and in the sudden darkness, Hope said, " Forgive me. I am the meanest female in the whole world."

Then it was all right. They sat side by side, in the swing, looking up at the darkening sky with the summer stars beginning to bloom above them one by one through the single tree. Far off the trolley, far off the trucks, far off the aunt, the uncle and the two children of the house, far off the newsboys crying beyond the garage, far off the world as they sat there in the walled garden in the evening.

Hope said, " No, we shouldn't " and " I'm afraid, afraid . . ." and " Darling, darling," and Noah was shy and triumphant and dazzled and humble, and after it was over they lay there crushed and subdued by the wilderness of feeling through which they had blundered . . .

IRWIN SHAW, *The Young Lions*

Incantation

Fly on the wings of the young green leaves :
Ride on the wave of the south-west wind :
Let us not lose while the clock-hand thieves—
(It was old Time and not we who sinned).
Sword in the heart and the deep wound's need,
Yours is the beauty of line, life-long,
Yours is the grace and the true blood breed,
Yours are the rose and the blackbird's song.

Dark is the sea on a white sand beach,
We and our dream shall find heart's ease there :
Let us take flight down the faint gold air
Into the sunset beyond all reach :
Fly to the land where no lost love grieves,
Borne on the wings of the young green leaves.

H. S. MACKINTOSH

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Just Because . . .

. . . just because, in virtue of being *the least unlikable* man in the place, I let him dance attendance on my young person, till I came to *need* him—all the same as my slippers to go to a ball in, or my bonnet to go out to walk. When I finally agreed to marry him, I cried excessively and felt excessively shocked—but if I had then said *no* he would have left me—and how could I dispense with what was my equivalent to my slippers or bonnet ?

JANE CARLYLE,
fragment from a torn letter to Jeannie Walsh

Paradise Garden

I bring you laughs and keep the tears myself
As I walk to you across the night
Who are the rich orchard of my delight
My wand of happiness, my wishing well

And all the pears of your aloofness fall
To gabble in these hot gardens like bursting children
Who glimpsed the daring of the witch's cauldron
And to their own burning gave no thought at all . . .

VALENTIN IREMONGER, *Reservations*

Interlude

So sir Launcelot departed, and tooke his sword underneath his arme. And so that noble knight went foorth in his mantell, and put himselfe in great jeopardy ; and so hee passed till hee came unto the queenes chamber ; and then sir Launcelot was lightly put into the chamber, and the queene and sir Launcelot were together, and whether they were a bed or at other manner of disports, me list not thereof to make mention ; for love that time was not as it is now a dayes . . .

SIR THOMAS MALORY, *Morte D'Arthur*

Winged Wonder

O lyric Love, half angel and half bird
And all a wonder and a wild desire.

ROBERT BROWNING

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THE SEAL GLASS

"Oh," thought John, "I shall never be tired of looking into *this* mirror"

by RUTH MANNING-SANDERS

THIS is a story my grandmother told me; nobody need believe it unless they wish, but everybody may believe it who will.

Well then, long ago there lived in a small seaside town an honest basket-maker, called John Pettigrew. He lived alone, for he had neither wife nor child, only an old shrew of a married cousin, Sarah Polgraine, who came in to cook and clean for him. John was as accustomed to Sarah's grumblings and scoldings as he was to the voice of the sea, and he did not notice them unless he was obliged to. He was grateful to her for looking after him; and, being thoroughly good-natured himself, and inclined to think well of his fellows, he had a conviction that, underneath all, Sarah was a good sort.

Underneath all, *everyone* was a good sort, so it seemed to John; but, when he tried to tell Sarah this, she would sniff and say, "That's all *you* know!" And then she would point out everyone's faults and failings, and tell John to "just look" at this, that, and the other one of their acquaintance! And John would shake his head, and say, "That's a squint-eyed way of looking, cousin Sarah!"

And Sarah would sniff again, and say *her* eyes saw plainly enough, and if some old fools would learn to face facts it would be more satisfactory for all concerned. But then John would chuckle, "You're better than your words, Sarah, I know!" And with that he would leave her, and go out to the yard where he worked, and where the sound of her scolding voice reached him but faintly.

This yard of John's was built against the sea wall; there was a shed in it for wet weather, and plenty of sunshine when the skies were clear; and there he would spend his days, among the ozier bundles and the big and little baskets, that were some of them severely practical, and some cunningly decorated, according to his fancy. A leisurely yet useful life was John's, with plenty of time for contemplation, and for a tune on his mouth-organ when his fingers grew tired, or his mind felt the need of refreshment.

One stormy afternoon in late summer, John took a sack and went down to the sea-shore in search of wreck-wood. The shore

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was littered with shining brown ribbons of seaweed, and the wood that he gathered was all tangled up with sand and shells. Great waves staggered and broke along the shore, and the run of them swirled up around John's feet, so that sometimes he was ankle-deep, and sometimes high and dry. From the tops of the breakers an off-sea wind flung foam into his eyes.

The low and watery sun, shooting its rays from amidst rapidly moving storm clouds, brightened the foam, and flung wide mirrors of light across the backs of the mountainous waves that rose and fell beyond the breakers. And in these waves two seals, an old one and a young one, were merrily playing. Up they floated like things of cork, and down they dived swift as birds flying; and when they dived John saw the shadow of their bodies through the waves, and when they floated up he saw their big eyes shining.

"Blessed creatures!" thought John. "No need to ask if you are happy! And they do say that all the wisdom of the deep unsearchable flows through your oily noddles!"

A powerful gust of wind set him stumbling backwards. The sun vanished in the gathering storm; between two close-packed clouds a wan fork of lightning flashed through the grey air; thunder rolled echoing among the rocks; a deluge of rain dropped its murky curtain between John and all else; and through this curtain came the roar of the unsearchable deep where the seals played.

"Time this old man was safe indoors!" thought John. And he slung his sack over his shoulder and made for home.

What a night to be sure! In all his long life John could not remember such another one. The wind boomed in the chimney, and the smoke blew down it; the light in the lamp jumped and flared and blackened the lamp-glass. The windows shook and clattered as the rain lashed them. The wind flung itself against the door like a wild beast determined to get in; and, at every thud the door gave, all the crocks on the dresser set up a protesting rattle. From every crack and hole came shrieks, whistles, hootings, flutings and trumpetings; and behind all sounded the steady roar of the sea leaping the wall beyond John's yard, and washing in among his ozier bundles and piles of baskets—even volleying under the kitchen door in a series of mad chuckles and lunatic snickerings, that added their small frenzy to the general hubbub.

John set a sandbag against the door, and hung up a blower in front of the fire. The storm seized the house in its fists and shook it, like a man rattling a dice-box.

"But the house is builded upon a rock," thought John; and, offering up a prayer for those "*that do business in great waters*," he put on his spectacles and took down his Bible.

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" They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the deeps . . . They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry . . ."

Bang ! Crash ! A wave hit the kitchen door with the roar of a cannon. And—heark'ee !—out there, a strange cry, that was neither bleat, nor bark, nor the groan of a man. One cry, and then no more. " If 'twere a fiend from hell," thought John, " on such a night a man must ope his door to 't." And, laying his spectacles on his Bible, he kicked the sandbag aside, and pulled back the door.

The wind came into the kitchen with a whoop ; the lamp flared and went out ; the fire roared, and the blower clattered onto the hearthstone. A wave leaped ghostly at the yard wall. John stooped in a pool of water, felt a fur-coated bundle, dragged it over the threshold, slammed the door, and relit the lamp.

Then he stared at the fur-coated bundle. It was a young seal; its eyes were glazed, its hind feet curled up, and its foreflippers sprawling.

" Dead and gone ! " thought John. " And a while back so prettily playing ! I guarantee your mammy told you to keep clear of the breakers. But youth is headstrong—and see what comes of it ! " He stooped to run his hand over the grey, sodden body.

Hullo, hullo ! What was this ? The body gave a hump and a wriggle under John's caressing hand ; a flipper waggled, the lack-lustre eyes kindled. The young seal was looking up at John Pettigrew with eyes of unutterable wisdom.

" Oh, well, come on then, if that's the case, little fellow ! " A delighted John lifted the seal in his arms and laid it carefully in front of the fire.

It was a merry evening they spent after that, John and his new companion. The little seal drank milk from a bottle, and ate the fish that was meant for John's supper. And John, remembering that seals are fond of music, played it a tune on his mouth-organ, and the little fellow clapped with his flippers, and bleated for more. More milk, or more fish, or more tunes ? John couldn't be sure ; so he plied it with all three.

And then they both fell asleep, the seal on the hearthrug, and John on the settle ; for this was the first house-companion he had ever possessed, and he didn't feel like going upstairs and leaving it lonesome.

But in his dreams an old seal came to him, and the tears were flowing from her eyes in silver streams ; and it seemed to John that if he didn't stop the flow of those tears they would presently drown the whole world. So in the morning, when the wind had dropped, and the sea heaved grey and sullen, as if in sulky apology for the havoc it had caused, John carried his new friend through

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the wreckage in his yard, and over the bricks of fallen chimneys and the slates of torn roofs out in the street, and among piles of blown sand and great heaps of stones and seaweed, down to the shore, and there he pushed the little fellow out into the sea.

The little fellow spun round and round like a rudderless boat, as if it had forgotten which way to steer itself. And then it struggled out of the water and bleated after John; and when John turned for home, the little fellow came flipping and humping up the sand so fast that it reached the yard gate as soon as John did.

So then John borrowed a boat, and rowed a long way out to sea, and dropped the little fellow gently overboard—and there was the little fellow spinning round and round once more, and crying out so loud that half the town could hear it. And so pitiful was its cry that John was obliged to take it into the boat again.

It came into John's mind, then, that perhaps the young seal was still suffering in some way from the bang the breakers had given it, and that it didn't feel able to fend for itself. "If only I could catch a glimpse of your mammy," he said, "I should know what to do." He looked this way and that over the sparkling water. "Seal, mammy seal!" he called. But there was no answer.

"I don't know what may be in her mind," said John. "But I do think I'll have to care for you a while longer." And with that he pulled for home; whilst the young seal lay contentedly in the bottom of the boat, and watched him with its wise eyes.

"Now," said Sarah Polgraine, "you can shoot the creature; and I'll make me a fur tippet for Sundays."

"I've never handled a gun in my life," said John with a chuckle. "And I don't intend to handle one now."

So then Sarah carried on alarmingly, and said that John couldn't keep an outlandish creature like that about the place, and that if he was afraid to handle a gun he could use a sharp knife. And it came into John's mind that though both he and Sarah were looking at the little seal, yet they were seeing different things. She was seeing a fur tippet, and he was seeing a dearly loved child. So he told her his dream about the tears that might presently drown the whole world, and Sarah said "Stuff and nonsense!" But it seemed to John that the young seal understood.

He went into the yard, cleared up the mess that the storm had made, and set to work again; and the little seal watched him with its shining eyes. And when John crossed the yard, it crossed the yard; and when John sat at his trade, it lay at his feet; and when John played on his mouth-organ, it made happy sounds and clapped with its flippers; and when John threw a ball, it caught the ball on its nose, and spun it up and caught it again, which was very pretty.

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to watch ; and in the evenings it lay on the hearthrug and gazed at the fire—and so things went on for some days.

But John, much as he joyed in the company of his little friend, couldn't get the dream of an old seal with tear-streaming eyes out of his mind ; and every day, when his work was done, he went down to the shore and looked into the grey, or the green, or the blue water for sight of the one who had shed those tears. And the little seal went with him, but it looked at John, and not at the water.

And then, one day, through a wave green and clear as glass John saw the shape of a swimmer ; and up came a round, glistening head, turning this way and that, as if in search of something. " There's your mammy at last," said John ; " and it's into the water you go, my beauty, and no nonsense this time ! "

And, so saying, he picked the little fellow up, and waded out as far as he could, and flung his playmate from him. Then he made a run for dry ground, and hid behind a rock, with just his head poked out to watch what would happen. And first there was the young seal spinning round and round like a rudderless boat, and crying after John ; and then, out to sea, there was the old seal reared upright through a green wave and calling after the young one ; and then there was the young one swimming out towards the green wave ; and then there was nothing but the tossing water. Then a lifting wave bore the shapes of two swimmers in its bosom, and, as they floated up on the wave's crest, John saw their big eyes shining.

And now there was John going home, rejoicing that he had done right, but with a lonely feeling in his heart.

And is that the end of the story ? No, indeed ! Though it has taken some time in the telling, it is only the beginning ; and what follows is what you may believe or not believe, as you will.

Next Sunday, John took a walk by the seashore. He wasn't exactly looking for the seals, you understand, but he was thinking about them—picturing to himself what life would be like in the deep places of ocean, and of the things to be seen there, which no man has ever seen. And, all of a sudden, the thought came to him that man knew but little, and thought less, of the strangeness and power and glory of creation, and he took his mouth-organ out of his pocket and began to play a hymn.

Well, he hadn't played more than a bar of that hymn when, in the bright water just beneath him, he saw the old seal swimming, and balancing something on her nose. It wasn't a ball ; but what it was John could not tell, for, as she tossed it up and caught it again, it flashed so magnificently that it made John's eyes water to look at it. And then—whizz !—it was flying through the air towards John, and he caught it in his two hands.

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It was a small round mirror—and such a mirror! The frame was fashioned like a garland of flowers, and the heart of each flower was a great pearl, the petals were rubies and sapphires, and the leaves emeralds. John turned it this way and that in admiration, till it chanced that he turned it so that its glass reflected the sea, and there beneath him he saw, not a seal, but a beautiful woman with a child in her arms. The child wore a little crown of gold, and he stretched out his arms to John, and the woman smiled very sweetly, and then they both disappeared under the water. And John stood staring into the mirror as if he couldn't believe his eyes.

He slanted the mirror to the sky, and saw the clouds; they *were* clouds, you understand, and yet they were also palaces and towers, and great white swans, and majestic old men in snowy garments. He slanted the mirror to the earth, and saw the flowers and the bushes; they *were* flowers and bushes, but the stems of the flowers were birds and the leaves were wings, and every branch was a king with a jewelled crown. "Oh," thought John, as he made for home. "I shall never be tired of looking in *this* mirror!"

And, looking into it once again, he chanced to see his own face reflected; and he tucked the mirror hastily into his pocket, for he was almost ashamed to look at the glory and brightness, the majesty and beauty, of the lordly one who gazed kindly back at him.

Over against the sea wall he passed a group of old men, in their Sunday clothes, lounging to watch the water; some of them were squint-eyed, some pot-bellied and bandy, some sad, some foolish.

"I wonder now," thought John, "what the mirror will make of this lot!" So he took it out of his pocket and slanted it upon them. And there they were—lords of the earth, every one of them: strong and straight, and handsome and brave, and dressed fit for the Kingdom of Heaven.

"If that's the way it is," said John to himself, "not only I, but the whole of the town, would be better for a peep into this mirror." And he got a strong nail and hung the mirror on his front door, which was always shut, because he never went in that way.

You may be sure there was soon a crowd round the door, everyone jostling and pushing to have a look at themselves. Nobody knew quite what to make of what they saw. Giddy girls came up, and looked and went away hushed and awestruck; old men and women looked, and walked down the street holding their heads high and smiling to themselves; young men looked, and walked off proud and solemn as priests at a sacrifice. And in the dawn, when the street was empty, a thief came by, and coveted the frame for its precious stones; but, as he reached to unhook the mirror from its nail, he saw his face reflected, and it was the face of an angel.

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So he left the mirror where it was, and tiptoed away; because, of course, angels are not thieves.

It would take too long to tell of all the people who looked into John Pettigrew's mirror, and of what they saw there; but be sure that whoever looked saw nothing but beauty and goodness, because there was nothing else to see. And it wasn't long before there wasn't an evil, or a selfish, or a sick, or an angry person left in the town; because everyone remembered what they were really like, and behaved accordingly.

The prison was empty, the law courts were turned into a dancing school, and the policemen got tired of doing nothing, and took to growing strawberries. The mayor, by common consent, was left in authority; and if any citizen for a moment forgot himself and behaved foolishly, the mayor had but to order that he take a peep into John Pettigrew's mirror, and there was no more trouble with him.

There was only one person in the town who wasn't quite happy, and that was Sarah Polgraine. She was so used to grumbling and scolding that now, when everything was perfect and there was nobody left to find fault with, she felt like a pricked bubble. For what was the use of her having lived such an exemplary life, and worked herself to skin and bone, and done so much for John Pettigrew and a host of others, if it didn't give her the satisfaction of knowing herself to be more virtuous than anybody else in the town?

All this nonsense about reflections in a mirror! *She* knew what people were like, and what she was like, without any lying mirror to tell her! And so, every time she passed John Pettigrew's front door, Sarah Polgraine shut her eyes. For it seemed to her that the mirror had robbed her of her one pleasure in life.

That was an unhappy feeling to live with; and the unhappy feeling grew and grew, until there was no putting up with it. So one winter morning, when the wind was blowing half a hurricane, and the sea was grey and angry, she rose with the first streak of daylight, and ran to John Pettigrew's house; and, shutting her eyes, unhooked the mirror, tucked it under her shawl, and went and stood on a rock by the sea-shore, to throw the tiresome thing back to the deep places where it had come from.

The wind was blowing so hard that she nearly lost her balance, but she raised her arm and threw; and there was the mirror now, flashing out over the water with its myriad-coloured jewels a-gleam in the rising sun. But, just as it left her hand, it happened that Sarah Polgraine for the first time saw her face reflected in it; and though it was but for a spinning second that she saw that face, certainly it was not the face of a woman who could do such an evil thing, and she began to weep bitterly, and cried out in a loud voice: "Oh, what have I done? Give it back! Give it back!"

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Then the round, glistening head of the old seal appeared on the top of a wave, balancing the mirror on her nose; and first she spun the mirror up and caught it, and then she gave it a toss and sent it flying back over the water to Sarah Polgraine.

Sarah Polgraine stretched out her hands; but what with the tears streaming from her eyes, and the wind blowing her hair across them, she couldn't see anything clearly, and, instead of catching the mirror, she let it slip through her fingers. It was dashed against the rock, and broke into a hundred pieces.

Sarah Polgraine scrambled off the rock and set up such a loud wailing that soon half the town was on the seashore. Some began to gather up the splinters, and they were the sensible ones, for in the fragments that they picked up they could still see, though cracked and piecemeal, the image of their glory reflected. Others began to blame Sarah Polgraine; and, as soon as they did that, she began to justify herself, and clean forgot the face she had seen for one spinning second in the mirror. And soon the place was echoing with angry voices and hot words.

One man picked up the jewelled frame and said he would have that, anyway; but another tried to wrench it from him, and then there were blows, as well as angry words. The two of them fell off the rock into the sea, and there might have been murder done, had not a policeman, peacefully at work on the strawberry bed in his back garden, heard the racket and come running to take up his official duties.

And so it wasn't very long before the townspeople went back to their old ways, as if no such thing as a mirror from the unsearchable deep had ever hung outside John Pettigrew's door to show them a different image of themselves: the quarrelsome quarrelled, the drunkards drank, the giglots giggled, and the thieves stole; the law courts were reopened, and the policemen put on their helmets; in fact, as Sarah Polgraine said, it was shameful the way people went on, and what the world was coming to she couldn't think!

Only the sensible ones, John Pettigrew amongst them, cherished each his piece of broken mirror, and, by taking a peep into it now and then, carried the image of a lordly one in their hearts.

Yes, that's the end of the story; except that whenever, as a young girl, things went criss-cross with me and life seemed all awry, my grandmother, who was a wise and peace-loving old body, would shake her head over my glum face, and say, "Ah, child, you'd think differently if you could take a peep into John Pettigrew's mirror."

* * *

Chivalry: releasing beautiful maidens from other men's castles, and taking them to your own castle.

H. W. NEVINSON

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FIND THE LADY

Have you ever observed what impossible things happen in this world?

by WILLIAM WALLACE IRWIN

MONSIEUR LEVALLON is an *Inspecteur de Police*, or as we have it, a Police Detective of the ancient city of Paris, and our acquaintance dates from the time some years ago when my flat in that town was raided and robbed. When off duty, Monsieur Levallon frequents a quiet little café in our neighbourhood, where he likes to read his paper to the accompaniment of a cup of that strange dark fluid which the middle-class French are firmly convinced is coffee. Monsieur Levallon, however, usually modifies the virulence of the beverage by sipping at the same time from a tiny glass containing about a tablespoonful of cheap brandy; this, with his pipe and the newspaper, constitutes his only relaxation when not on duty. Although I am many years older than he, his attitude to me is distinctly paternal, not to say grand-paternal; he seems to feel that a man who was foolish enough to let his flat be robbed, and who in addition has the misfortune—possibly undeserved—of not being French, should have his faltering footsteps guided through the maze of Parisian life.

The other day, entering the café for a glass of beer on my way home from the office, I took a place beside him on the *banquette*, that red plush-covered seat that extends along the wall in all self-respecting cafés.

I inquired about his health, and when he had explained that it was good and had thanked me for the inquiry, I asked about the health of Madame Levallon and was desolated to hear that she had a little indigestion due to over-eating at a wedding feast she had attended on the previous day. He then inquired about my health and that of Madame, and expressed delight on hearing that we both carried ourselves well. These indispensable preludes to French conversation having been successfully accomplished, the talk began.

"Have you ever observed, Monsieur, how expensive is thrift when carried to excess?"

"Yes, *Monsieur l'Inspecteur*," I replied, "often in business I encounter those who because they saved a franc were later forced to spend ten."

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"Perfectly, Monsieur, and I can illustrate the point by relating to you a case that has just come before the courts, and which it fell to my lot to prepare."

"That will be very interesting, but before you begin, permit me to offer you another cup of coffee. *Garçon! une café et une fine pour Monsieur l'Inspecteur.*"

The dark beverage and the problematic brandy having been placed with a click on the marble-topped table, the detective bowed his thanks and continued:

It is over in the Grenelle quarter, he said, that there lives in a little old-fashioned flat, a Monsieur and Madame Pomme. They are both of them of peasant stock from Normandy, and they are both of them avaricious to an excess. Monsieur knows that the peasants of Normandy are keen after a bargain, are saving, and never spend a sou foolishly, but with these two it is excessive. They have no business to occupy their minds, and at the time this tale begins their only occupation was the extracting and putting aside of as many francs as they could obtain from Madame Bayeux who lived with them.

Madame Bayeux was the mother of Madame Pomme and therefore as you will perceive the mother-in-law of Monsieur Pomme; she had inherited lands and houses from her late husband and her income was large, but little would she give to her daughter and less to her son-in-law. However by one means or another this agreeable pair managed to extract enough money from her clutches to enable them to live without working and to wait more or less patiently for the time when heaven should call the old woman to itself and permit them to inherit.

Now lest you should grow sympathetic, Monsieur, I should inform you that Madame Bayeux was a most unpleasant person. She stood not higher than three apples; she was dry and shrivelled, with a hook nose and a mean tongue, and—as one of my *collègues* expressed it—she was like smoke in your eyes, and as pleasant to have in the house as a case of smallpox. She had made the life of her daughter so impossible from her earliest youth that she married Monsieur Pomme in order to escape from home. However as Monsieur Pomme was not particularly fond of toil, he convinced his wife that they had better continue living with Madame Bayeux, especially as he had devised a method of obtaining from her a small but regular income.

As I have already related to you, Madame Bayeux was of an avarice, of an avarice sordid. Let me illustrate: when she had finished her meat, she would turn her plate upside down and eat her dessert from the bottom side. You inquire why? It is

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simplicity itself—washing dishes requires soap and a towel; the system of Madame Bayeux made for one less plate for each of the family, hence less wear on the towels and an economy of soap.

But how, you inquire, Monsieur, could Monsieur Pomme get money from so miserly a mother-in-law? *Eh bien!* His system was of an ingenious simplicity; it turned on the fact that while Madame Bayeux cared little for the comfort of others, she liked to be comfortable herself. She owned a large and luxurious car and her son-in-law was obliged to act as an unpaid chauffeur. She knew nothing about motors, and so was forced to rely on him. I would hate to have to estimate what that car required in tyres, petrol, oil, and repairs in the course of a year, but I doubt if any car in Paris was as costly to operate—seeing that it provided clothes and pocket money for two greedy people.

Now one morning about three months ago the old woman snaps at her son-in-law, "Gaston, get the car ready; tomorrow we go to Bolbec. I have had a good offer for the property there and am going to sell it."

"But," says Gaston, "that's the farm where you were born, and it brings in a good rent even if the big house is empty."

"Mind your own business," she snarls. "If I listened to a do-nothing like you, I'd have been in the poor-house long ago. The offer includes the big house and all its furniture, and with what I'll get I can buy Denoel's farm and double the value of the property at Baclair. You never thought of that, hey? You're as big a fool as Germaine."

Gaston tries again.

"But," he says, "you can sign all the papers here in Paris and . . ."

She interrupts him, "*Mon dieu!* Why am I forced to live with a pair of imbeciles like these? They know absolutely nothing about business . . . it's a wonder I have sheets left to sleep in. You cow-head! Do you think I'm going to let Père Boos get away with that antique clock among the other furniture? Ten years ago a dealer offered me eighty thousand francs for it! You're going to tie the one in the hall on top of the car—it only cost three thousand francs—and I'll leave it in the house and bring back the old one. The Père Boos can't say anything because when he was taking the inventory I slipped his man a hundred francs, and the paper only says 'one grandfather clock'."

Maybe the old devil was right about Gaston being a cow-head, but Germaine was her own daughter and *she* never lost sight of where the North was. She pipes up, "Gaston darling, go at once and get the carburettor repaired if we are leaving in the morning."

"What!" screams the old girl. "Is that pig of an auto again

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in trouble? After all my saving I'll end by dying in the poor-house!"

"Oh," says Gaston who has taken his wife's hint, "it's really nothing—just the floater that is worn out. I'll take the car to the garage at once and replace the thing myself. It'll only take a couple of hours."

"Yes," squeals his mother-in-law, "it'll only take a couple of hours, but how many francs will it take, hey?"

Gaston did a little quick thinking; he had not got anything out of the old spinning-top for over a week, so he decided to soak her. "A floater, mother darling, only costs fifteen hundred francs, but they last for more than a year."

The old woman was so shocked that she forgot to scream. She opens her mouth a couple of times like a fish, and then says in a low, calm voice, "Fifteen hundred francs! I'll never pay it. You'll have to make the old one do."

"Very good," says Gaston, "if you feel that way about it. I'll do all that I can, but I must warn you that the car will break down somewhere this side of Fleury, and a country garage will soak us at least twice fifteen hundred when they see that we are helpless."

As this is just what Madame Bayeux would have done if she had been a garagist, the argument told. She pulls up her skirt and from a buttoned pocket that she had in the lining she fishes out fifteen hundred francs which she hands to her son-in-law.

"Now mind you," she says, "bring back a receipted bill from the garage. I'm too old for a white-nose like you to put anything over."

Gaston tries to look deeply offended.

"Oh my mother," he said, "how can you say such unkind things! You hurt me deeply. Have I ever been anything but scrupulously honest? Thank heaven my parents brought me up to respect other people's property."

Then he takes the car round the corner and parks it in front of his favourite café, sits down at a table on the pavement, and with a paper and a few glasses of beer puts in a pleasant and healthful couple of hours.

When he thinks he has been absent for a sufficient time, he stops at a garage where for many months he has had a working arrangement with the proprietor. This garagist is called One-thumb and is not at all a nice man, although so far we have not caught him in anything really serious.

You inquire the origin of his name? It is of a depressing simplicity. In the spring of 1945, a soldier American—he was a black soldier—found this garagist trying to swipe a can of petrol from his jeep, so he called aloud and with much noise for an agent

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of the police. In an endeavour to tranquillize the soldier, the garagist thrust his left thumb inside the cheek of the black. Monsieur is doubtless familiar with the trick as are all criminals; when the cheek is stretched outward great pain is produced and the noise one is making is greatly reduced. Unfortunately the garagist was not sufficiently adroit in placing his thumb and the black soldier had strong teeth. Monsieur comprehends?

"One-thumb," says Gaston, "make me out a bill to Madame Bayeux for replacing one floater in her car—fourteen hundred and seventy-five francs."

"All right," says One-thumb, "but fifty francs a bill ain't enough; from now on my charge is ten per cent—so come across with one hundred and forty-seven francs fifty."

"What?" squeals Gaston.

"Yes," says One-thumb who had a terrible grouch that morning, "come across, or I'll go round and tell her that in the last six months you have had over sixty thousand francs in fake bills."

Monsieur knows our proverb, "To a good rat, a good cat," and Gaston was no fool where money was concerned, so he snaps back, "And suppose I tell the income-tax man of more than sixty thousand francs that you have not reported, and prove it with the receipted bills . . . then what?"

"Oh well," says One-thumb after swallowing hard a couple of times, "I guess real friends like us won't quarrel over a few francs—we'll stick to the old arrangement."

"Thanks," says Gaston. "I knew that you was just kidding and wouldn't try to put nothin' over on an old pal."

So Gaston returns to the flat with the receipted bill and tells his mother-in-law, "Behold, Mother; you accuse me of dishonesty and daily hurt my sensitive feelings. Is it not that I have your interests at heart, that I bargain with the garagist and make him reduce his price by twenty-five francs which I now give you? Oh Mother, how can you be so unkind to your loving child?"

The old devil snarls at him but says nothing.

The next morning they start off for Bolbec, with the big hall clock wrapped in an old blanket and tied on top of the car. Gaston drove with Germaine beside him, and the old woman had the back all to herself. The fifteen hundred francs kept trotting in her head, and she made the trip a hell even to the two who were used to her little ways. Several times Gaston called her attention to the fact that he had saved her twenty-five francs, but it did no good and she continued to refer to the amount as fifteen hundred. She so got on Gaston's nerves that he resolved that never again would he try to save her money. At times women can be so unreasonable; has not Monsieur noticed it?

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When they arrived at the farm, Madame Bayeux was if possible in a more evil humour than when she started, and her acid tongue never rested. She sat down in a chair and looked at the big clock. "And that's eighty thousand francs that you two fools would have presented to that fat pig the Père Boos! I always knew that Germaine was of a stupidity, and well she proved it by marrying such an essence of a dunghill as that Gaston! Neither of them is aware of the value of a sou, and if it wasn't for me those two . . ."

Here, Monsieur, her jaw dropped and she slumped down in the chair—dead in the middle of her bad language. Terrible, was it not?

When they had assured themselves that she was really dead, they laid her on a table. Gaston stood scratching his head and thinking, but Germaine remembered her duty and commenced to cry.

After about ten minutes, Gaston who had been meditating deeply, says, "There, there; that's enough."

"You're sure?" asked Germaine.

"Of course; especially as there is no one here to hear you, and we have work to do."

Germaine sits up. "Yes," she says, "we must notify the Mayor of the death, get the undertaker, and make the arrangements about sending the body back to Paris, and . . ."

But Gaston interrupts her.

"Listen," he says, "have you thought what all that's going to cost? You haven't ever died away from home in France or you wouldn't be so cheerful. First, it'll take at least three days to wind up all the red tape at the town hall, and as we haven't got any food in the house we'll have to eat at the *auberge* and they'll soak us plenty. Then, moving a corpse by the train costs double First Class fare as well as the fare of someone who must accompany it. And then there is the charge for handling her when she arrives in Paris. I tell you, by the time we get her home, she'll have set us back twenty or thirty thousand francs. And after that we'll have all the cost of the funeral to pay."

"Oh!" says Germaine. "I never thought of that." And she bursts into tears again. "O Mother! Mother! How could you be so thoughtless and extravagant! Gaston, I don't care what you say, she was always reckless with money where her own comfort was concerned! Is there nothing we can do about it?"

"We-l-l," meditates Gaston, "if we could take her back to Paris in the car, and smuggle her into the flat without anybody knowing she was dead . . . why . . . we would only have the funeral to pay for."

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" Yes," says Germaine wiping away her tears, " we can put her in the car and when we arrive, I'll say she is sick, and she is so small that you can easily carry her upstairs wrapped in the rug. And then we'll send for a doctor but she'll die before he arrives. That's fine."

" Yes, that'll save a lot of money ; but suppose we are stopped on the road for any reason and the policeman finds that we have a corpse in the back seat—that won't be so good. There's a hell of a fine for moving a body without papers. You'd think that nobody ever died in this country, they make such a fuss about a corpse."

Both of them were terribly troubled, Monsieur, for it looked as if no matter which way they turned they would have to spend a lot of money. Suddenly Gaston sees the antique clock and gets an idea.

" I have it," he says. " We'll put Mother in the clock, an' even if we do get stopped on the road nobody's going to look inside an old clock we're taking to Paris. There isn't any risk there, an' think of the money we'll save ! And we'll diddle old Père Boos at the same time, just as the old lady was goin' to."

So they carried in the clock they had brought from Paris and put it in the place of the antique one, and in the latter they put the old lady. Gaston was just about to wrap the clock in the blanket when Germaine lets out a shriek . . . " Imbecile ! Cow-head ! Essence of a pumpkin ! Is it not enough that I am speechless with sorrow at being bereft of the only mother I ever had, but that you should try to ruin me. Poor dear Mama was right ; if one let you have your own way, one would die in the poor-house ! "

She opens the door of the clock, turns up the skirt of the old woman and from the buttoned pocket extracts the wallet. Monsieur, I assure you that, as it came out at the examination, the purse contained over a million francs in large notes.

When they had counted the money, Gaston shakes his head sadly and says, " And to think, she wasn't even grateful when I saved her twenty-five francs on that floater."

Then they wrapped the clock in the old blanket and tied it on top of the car, just as they had done on leaving Paris.

It was late in the afternoon when they started back, and by the time dusk began to fall they were both very hungry, and Gaston said, " It's going to be very late when we get back. What do you say about stopping at Rouen and having a bite ? "

" Are you crazy ? " cries Germaine. " Do you know what it will cost to eat in that city ? You needn't think that just because we have inherited, we're going to throw money away. You stop at some little hole an' we'll save a lot . . . try Suzay . . . nothing ever happened there."

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Suzay, as you are doubtless aware, Monsieur, is a tiny village of which one end of its solitary street barely touches the south side of National Highway Number 14, running from Le Havre to Paris, and along which Gaston and Germaine were travelling. The village street was muddy, so Gaston parked the car at the edge of the wide National Highway and they got out and walked to the inn, where, after Germaine had bargained a bit, they got a pretty good meal. Germaine even let Gaston have a cup of coffee and a little glass of Calvados that cost extra.

"Take your time," she said. "The later we get to Paris the better; there'll be fewer people around when we take the clock in."

So Gaston loafed over his coffee and smoked two cigarettes instead of one, and they waited until it was quite dark before they paid their bill and left.

Monsieur, I ask you to imagine their feelings when they find that their car is not where they left it! At first they cannot themselves believe it, but, *hélas*, it is only too true—car, clock, and *cadavre* have all disappeared. Germaine was the first to speak.

"Here's a fine mess," she says. "We can't stand here and talk about it, and if we go back to the inn all the village will be asking questions in five minutes. Let's walk down the road to Richeville—it's only half a mile—and we can take a room there for the night."

So they do that; but when they are shut in their room at the little Hotel-of-the-White-Horse-and-the-Seven-Deadly-Sins they find that things are even worse than they first thought. Does Monsieur appreciate the situation? If they clamour to the police about their stolen car, there's the question of the corpse—and they know that there's a big fine—and perhaps gaol—for moving a corpse illegally. Also, if they do not bring Madame Bayeux back to die in Paris, then it is likely that people will be inquiring what has become of her, and that being a difficult question to answer, the police might put their nose in the affair and . . .

At this moment Gaston let out a cry as if he had been stabbed, "*O mon dieu, mon dieu!* Germaine, hast thou thought . . . without the *cadavre* of thy mother we cannot prove her death, and thus we cannot inherit? No, not a sou can we touch!"

And the poor fellow threw himself face down across the bed and burst into tears. The situation was of a sadness, was it not? I can see that Monsieur is moved. But let us return to the missing car.

The person who had acquired the car and the late Madame Bayeux was a local amateur who had just entered into the field of stealing automobiles, and who lacked that surety of touch that only

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experience gives. The poor chap will doubtless never make a success in the trade, for by the time he is released from the prison at Fontevrault all the methods of stealing cars will probably have changed and he will have to begin at the bottom all over again. However it was his confession that enabled us to trace out all the story which I have the honour of relating to Monsieur.

This individual, who was known to his friends as Tony-the-Toad, ran the village garage in Richeville and had only begun to steal a car from time to time. The evening we are talking about, he had delivered a repaired car at Boisemont and was returning home on foot—it was only a little over a mile—when he saw the car the Pommes had parked beside the main road. It was easy for him to locate the owners in the *auberge* and he judged that he had at least an hour before they would finish their meal, so he quietly started the car and drove it into his garage.

I should perhaps explain to you, Monsieur, that the garage of Tony-the-Toad backed against a hill and that behind it, hollowed into the hillside, was an ancient cider cellar that was ideal as a place for altering the appearance of stolen cars; from the front nothing showed that it existed, yet by a clever arrangement the back wall of the garage would slide aside and one could drive right into the cellar.

So Tony-the-Toad runs the stolen car into his cellar and starts at once to change the wheels. It is strange, but the wheels are the most characteristic part of a car; if a car has had yellow wheels and they are replaced by red ones the whole appearance of the car seems to be altered . . . but you, Monsieur, are of course aware of this and the first thing you do when you steal a car is to change the wheels.

Before jacking-up the car Tony-the-Toad—his name, Monsieur? It was because of his big eyes and bigger mouth . . . well as I was saying, he decided to lighten things by removing the big package from the roof. When after some trouble—for of course he has to work alone—he gets the thing down, he finds that he owns one large antique clock containing a small and elderly corpse. He is not horrified, but he is annoyed, distinctly annoyed—a corpse is so hard to get rid of, and so hard to explain if you are caught with it in your possession. As he told me at the examination, "It is not right, *Monsieur l'Inspecteur*. People should not be permitted to carry corpses in clocks and get honest garagists into trouble."

However as it is now very late he acts quickly, puts the clock in his station waggon and runs down the road a few kilometers; here he unloads it and leaves it, just as if it had fallen from some passing truck. Then he returns to his shop and continues the necessary work of changing the appearance of Monsieur Pomme's car.

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Early the next morning the clock is found by Bebert Busted-nose who is coming down to Normandy in a large truck to purchase butter, eggs, and cheese for his boss who is one of the big operators on the Paris black-market. To Busted-nose the clock is just so much money picked up on the road; he shoves it into the truck without investigation of the interior and pushes on to Richeville where he sells it for two thousand francs to the proprietor of the Hotel-of-the-White-Horse-and-the-Seven-Deadly-Sins. This person was one of the black-market crowd with whom Busted-nose had regular dealings, so he asked no questions at all. As soon as Busted-nose has left, he puts the clock in a pushcart and shoves it down the alley to the back door of Papa Cohen's place.

Now this Papa Cohen was an antique dealer from Paris who had found that tourists would pay a higher price for antiques found in a village shop than they would for the same articles in a city store. 'Monsieur understands? They like to think that they have cheated an ignorant peasant and have purchased something for less than its real value. So Papa Cohen learned to talk the Norman patois, wore sabots and a blouse, and looked more like a Norman peasant than real peasants ever look. Oh no! You are in error, Monsieur. Papa Cohen was quite honest . . . well . . . as honest as a dealer in antiques ever is.

When the hotel proprietor had waked up Papa Cohen, for it was still very early, he told him a long tale about an urgent need for money, and how he was forced to sell this clock which his wife had inherited from her grand-uncle, and how he had come early so that the neighbours would not know that he was in difficulties, and how he must have at least fifteen thousand francs for it.

Of course Papa Cohen recognized the value of the clock at once, and he was also aware of the anxiety of the seller to get the thing into the house where passers-by could not see it, so he shrugged his shoulders and said, "My poor friend, I'll do anything I can to help you out of your difficulty, but haven't you anything else you can sell me? Those great clocks are a drug on the market. I might have that in my shop for a couple of years before I could get rid of it, and then the prices are so low that there is very little profit to be made. All I can offer you is five thousand francs, and that is only because my heart is big and I cannot bear to see a friend in misery."

The hotel keeper—but it is useless to repeat to Monsieur all the details of the bargaining, and it is enough to say that in the end the seller accepted eight thousand francs and left with tears in his eyes, brought there by the hardness of Papa Cohen's heart.

When he was gone, Papa Cohen got an oily rag and started to polish the inlaid wood of his purchase; of course he opened the

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door and . . . Monsieur knows what he found. Naturally his first impulse was to go to the hotel keeper and raise hell, but being a clever man he quickly saw that the seller would deny that he had ever seen the clock and that the corpse might, so to speak, become alive—something that would be more than embarrassing for an honest antique dealer. So he set the clock in the darkest corner of his shop while he meditated with himself what was best to be done.

Has Monsieur ever observed what impossible things occur in this world? Many of my associates say it is just chance, but me—I prefer to see the interference of the *Bon Dieu.* So many times I have seen happen things that couldn't happen, that I am convinced that the Good God must have something to do with it.

Regard now! Gaston and Germaine have not much appetite for breakfast, and after their coffee they dress and go out to search for an idea in the fresh air. The shop of Papa Cohen is in a narrow dark street—old furniture looks best in the shadow—but just as the Pommes pass the place, a ray of sunlight not bigger than my arm pierces the window and falls like a searchlight on the door of the clock where it stands in the darkest corner of the room. Now I ask Monsieur, can that be chance?

Germaine and Gaston regard each other, and the former says, "Gaston, you will keep your big mouth closed. This is my affair." They enter Papa Cohen's shop and Germaine says with a gaiety that she didn't really feel, "May we enter and regard? We don't really desire to purchase, but you have so many pretty things."

"Oh Madame," says Papa Cohen in that peasant speech that he had taken so much trouble to learn, "it is a real pleasure to have a visit from one so young and beautiful as yourself, and as for purchasing . . ." he makes a gesture to signify that that is the last thing he has in mind.

Monsieur comprehends that this speech is merely an opening move and means nothing at all, for Papa Cohen is watching closely to see what they are really after. Germaine prices one or two little things but finds them all too dear, while Papa Cohen notes that she can't keep her eyes off the clock in the back of the shop.

Finally they start to leave and Germaine with the door-knob in her hand casts a seemingly careless glance about the room and appears to notice the clock for the first time. "That's a nice clock you have there. Gaston, don't you think it might look well in our hall? How much are you asking for it, Monsieur?"

"Oh that's not for sale," replies Papa Cohen. "It has been in my family for many generations. I merely keep it in the store because my house is so small that I have no other place."

Germaine approaches the clock and regards it thoughtfully, wondering if the corpse is still in it. Papa Cohen has placed

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himself in such a position that in the crowded shop she cannot touch it, but she sees a bit of skirt protruding below the door. At the same time the shopkeeper sees it and sees that she has seen it, so he knows that she must buy at any price.

Germaine draws a deep breath. "I like it," she says, "and I am sure you will not refuse to sell if I make you a reasonable offer—say fifty thousand francs?"

"Oh Madame!" says Papa Cohen, throwing his hands in the air. "That is a beautiful specimen of pure Louis XIV, and it came to me from my great-grandfather. I am a poor man as all the village knows, but I could not consent to part with an heirloom like that for less than two hundred thousand francs."

It is needless to repeat the long debate that followed, but at the end Germaine had to pay something over one hundred thousand francs for the clock, which after all was fair enough—seeing that she had to have it and that Papa Cohen had to get rid of it.

After the clock had been wrapped up in the same old blanket, Germaine says—rather white in the face, but still as carelessly as she could, "We'll call for it later in the day. Come, Gaston dear."

She led her husband down the street to the Café of the Four Friends, where she had three brandies before she could speak. "One hundred and seven thousand francs, and now we have to buy a car to get it back to Paris! Gaston, you were well inspired when you told me how we could save money by bringing Mama back to Paris in the clock!"

She almost burst because she had to say this in a whisper for fear the waitress would overhear. Gaston was wise enough to say nothing but, "I suppose I'd better go and try to pick up a car at the garage."

"Yes, and you'd better pick it cheap! *Mon dieu*, I wouldn't trust you if I knew anything about cars! Mama was right—you cow-head!—you'll have us both begging yet. You have no idea of the value of money."

Gaston went to the local garage, where Tony-the-Toad who had seen him through the window before he stole the car, knew at once that he had a customer that would buy anything at any price. Naturally Tony's first thought was to force Gaston to purchase his own stolen car, but, as I stated, he was only an amateur car thief, and being comparatively inexperienced he foresaw so many complications and dangers that he did not have the courage to attempt the deal. I will not bore Monsieur with the details, but the Toad forced the unfortunate Gaston to buy an ancient Citröen which suffered from every infirmity that a car could have and still be coaxed to run. And he paid, Monsieur, he paid the price that had been asked many years before when the same car was new!

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The voyage back to Paris with the late Madame Bayeux on the roof was even worse for Gaston than the trip out when she was in the car. Germaine had inherited her mother's tongue, and she had plenty to talk about because three times the ancient chariot broke down and each time the local garagist soaked them good. But they did have one bit of luck; they got the corpse into the house without anybody knowing, and the next day the doctor reported that the old woman had died in her bed from heart-failure, probably due to the fatigue of the trip to Normandy. She was buried in the cemetery of Saint Ouen just as they had planned.

"But," I asked, "how did you come to know all this?"

"Because, Monsieur, Germaine was so avaricious that she could not let well enough alone. With Madame Bayeux safely interred, she reported the theft of her car. We ran it down to Tony-the-Toad, and from what he told we unravelled the whole skein. They were heavily fined for their various breaches of the law. What the whole affair cost the Pommes is difficult to say; it must be close to all that they found in the old woman's wallet. And now I must leave Monsieur, for Madame Levallon has always a delicious *pot-au-feu* for dinner on Tuesday evening, and she does not like that I shall be in lateness. But as I stated in the beginning, there is nothing so expensive as being too thrifty."

* * *

WINGS OF LOVE

"I
Through
Blue
Sky
Fly
To
You.
Why?
Sweet
Love,
Feet
Move
So
Slow!"

FRANK SIDGWICK

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August Night

"*Canst thou guide Arcturus . . .*"

TOWARDS midnight Arcturus, one of the beacons of June, sinks towards the western horizon: and Capella, one of the beacons of January, rises in the east. The season of ice and snow is already chasing the season of blossoming out of the sky. The whole cycle of the seasons is etched in fire and spread out before our eyes.

Six weeks ago Vega stood directly overhead at midnight. Now she is half-way across the western sky, following the Corona towards the mountains. But until Sirius rises at midnight towards the end of October, Vega will continue to be the jewel of the night—a clear, sparkling diamond with a drop of translucent blue. In our latitude only Sirius is brighter, but Sirius and Vega are seldom on view simultaneously.

Fourteen thousand years ago Vega was the pole star, and will be again. It is in the south position of the circle around which the north pole travels every twenty-six thousand years. A star of first magnitude and conspicuously beautiful, Vega will make a much lovelier pole star than the dim Polaris with which we are now temporarily associated.

Now the stupendous luminous banner of the Milky Way bisects the sky and sends forth a flood of pearly light flowing lazily through the world's darkness.

BROOKS ATKINSON, *Once Around the Sun*

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★*Like many another who had spent every spare moment of his boyhood sailing any craft he could lay hands on, young Nicholas Monsarrat joined the R.N.V.R. when war broke out. When it ended he was a Lieutenant-Commander. Grim years of convoy work, first in corvettes and later in command of a frigate, had shown him new and terrible aspects of the sea he loved. The result was one of the great books of the war, "The Cruel Sea." ARGOSY readers will rediscover its heroic qualities in this new short novel about another voyage.*

The First Part of

H.M.S. MARLBOROUGH WILL ENTER HARBOUR

by NICHOLAS MONSARRAT

THE SLOOP *Marlborough*, 1,200 tons, complement eight officers and 130 men, was torpedoed at dusk on the last day of 1942 while on independent passage from Iceland to the Clyde. She was on her way home for refit, and for the leave that went with it, after a fourteen-month stretch of North Atlantic convoy escort with no break, except for routine boiler-cleaning. Three weeks' leave to each watch—that had been the buzz going round the ship's company when they left Reykjavik after taking in the last convoy; but many of them never found out how much truth there was in that buzz, for the torpedo struck at the worst moment, with two-thirds of the ship's company having tea below decks, and when it exploded under the forward mess-deck at least sixty of them were killed outright.

H.M.S. *Marlborough* was an old ship, seventeen years old, and she took the outrage as an old lady of breeding should. At the noise and jar of the explosion a delicate shudder went all through her: then as her speed fell off there was stillness, while she seemed to be making an effort to ignore the whole thing; and then, brought face to face with the fury of this mortal attack, gradually and disdainfully she conceded the victory.

The deck plating of the fo'c'sle buckled and sagged, pulled downwards by the weight of the anchors and cables: all this deck, indeed, crumpled as far as the four-inch gun-mounting, which toppled forwards until the gun-muzzles were pointing foolishly to the sea; a big lurch tore loose many of the ammunition lockers and sent them cascading over the side. Until the way of her sixteen knots fell off, there were crunching noises as successive bulkheads took the weight of water, butted at it for a moment, and then gave in: and thus, after a

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space, she lay—motionless, cruelly hit, two hundred miles south-west of the Faeroes and five hundred miles from home.

So far it had been an affair of metal: now swiftly it became an affair of men. From forward came muffled shouting—screaming, some of it—borne on the wind down the whole length of the ship, to advertise the shambles buried below. The dazed gun's crew from "A" gun, which had been directly over the explosion, climbed down from their sagging platform and drew off aft. There was a noise of trampling running feet from all over the ship: along alleyways, up ladders leading from the untouched spaces aft: confused voices, tossed to and fro by the wind, called as men tried to find out how bad the damage was, what the orders were, whether their friends had been caught or not.

On the upper deck, near the boats and at the foot of the bridge-ladders, the clatter and slur of feet and voices reached its climax. In the few moments before a firm hand was taken, with every light in the ship out and only the shock of the explosion as a guide to what had happened, there was confusion, noisy and urgent: the paramount need to move quickly clashed with indecision and doubt as to where that move could best be made. The dusk, the rising sea, the bitterly cold wind, which carried an acrid smell in sharp eddying puffs, were all part of this discordant aftermath: the iron trampling of those racing feet all over the ship bound it together, co-ordinating fear into a vast uneasy whole, a spur for panic if panic ever showed itself.

It never did show itself. The first disciplined reaction, one of many such small reassurances, to reach the bridge was the quarter-master's voice, admirably matter-of-fact, coming up the wheel-house voice-pipe: "Gyro compass gone dead, sir!"

The midshipman, who shared the watch with the First Lieutenant and was at that moment licking a lip split open on the edge of the glass dodger, looked round uncertainly, found he was the only officer on the bridge, and answered: "Very good. Steer by magnetic," before he realized the futility of this automatic order. Then he jerked his head sideways, level with another voice-pipe, the one leading to the Captain's cabin, and called: "Captain, sir!"

There was no answer. Probably the Captain was on his way up already. God, suppose he'd been killed, though . . . The midshipman called again: "Captain, sir!" and a voice behind him said: "All right, Mid. I heard it."

He turned round, to find the comforting bulk of the Captain's duffle coat outlined against the dusk. It was not light enough to see the expression on his face, nor was there anything in his voice to give a clue to it. It did not occur to the midshipman to speculate about this, in any case: for him, this was simply the Captain, the man he had been waiting for, the man on whom every burden could now be squarely placed.

"Torpedo, sir."

"Yes."

The Captain, moving with purpose but without hurry, stepped up

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on to the central compass platform, glanced once round him—and sat down.

There was something special in that act of sitting down, there in the middle of the noise and movement reaching the bridge from all over the ship, and everyone near him caught it. The Captain, on the bridge, sitting in the Captain's chair. Of course: that was what they had been waiting for . . . It was the beginning, the tiny tough centre, of control and order. Soon it would spread outwards.

"Which side was it from?"

"Port, sir. Just under 'A' gun."

"Tell the engine-room what's happened . . . Where is the First Lieutenant?"

"He must have gone down, sir. I suppose he's with the Damage Control Party."

Up the voice-pipe came the quartermaster's voice again: "She won't come round, sir. The wheel's hard a-starboard."

"Never mind." The Captain turned his head slightly. "Pilot!"

A figure, bent over the chart table behind him, straightened up. "Sir?"

"Work out our position, and we'll send a signal."

"Just getting it out now."

The Captain bent forward to the voice-pipe again. "Bosun's Mate!"

"Sir?"

"Find the First Lieutenant. He'll be forrard somewhere. Tell him to report the damage as soon as he can."

"Aye, aye, sir."

That, at least, was a small space cleared . . . Under him the ship felt sluggish and helpless; on the upper deck the voices clamoured, from below the cries still welled up. He looked round him, trying in the increasing darkness to find out who was on the bridge. Not everyone he expected to see, not all the men who should have collected at such a moment, were there. The signalman and the bridge messenger. Two look-outs. Bridger, his servant, standing just behind him. Pilot and the Mid. Someone else he could not make out.

HE called: "Coxswain?"

There was a pause, and then a voice said: "He was below, sir."

"Who's that?"

"Adams, sir."

Adams was the Chief Bosun's Mate, and the second senior rating on board. After a moment the Captain said:

"If he doesn't get out, you take over, Adams . . . You'd better organize three or four of your quartermasters, for piping round the ship. I'll want you to stay by me. If there's anything to be piped you can pass it on."

"Aye, aye, sir."

There was too much noise on the upper deck, for a start. But

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perhaps it would be better if he spoke to them over the loud-hailer. Once more the Captain turned his head.

"Yeoman!"

Another pause, and then the same definitive phrase, this time from the signalman of the watch: "He was below, sir."

A wicked lurch, and another tearing noise from below, covered the silence after the words were spoken. But the Captain seemed to take them in his stride.

"See if the hailer's working," he said to the signalman.

"I've got the position, sir," said Haines, the navigating officer. "Will you draft a signal?"

"Get on to the W/T office and see if they can send it, first."

"The hailer's all right, sir," said the signalman. "Batteries still working."

"Very good. Train the speaker aft."

He clicked on the microphone, and from force of habit blew through it sharply. A healthy roar told him that the thing was in order. He cleared his throat.

"Attention, please! This is the Captain speaking." His voice, magnified without distortion, overcame the wind and the shouting, which died away to nothing, "I want to tell you what's happened. We've been torpedoed on the port side, under 'A' gun. The First Lieutenant is finding out about the damage now. I want you all to keep quiet, and move about as little as possible, until I know what the position is . . . 'X' gun's crew will stand fast, the rest of the watch-on-deck clear away the boats and rafts ready for lowering. Do *not* start lowering, or do anything else, until I give the order over this hailer, or until you hear the pipe. That is all."

The speaker clicked off, leaving silence on the bridge and all over the upper deck. Only the voices hidden below still called. He became aware that Haines was standing by his elbow, preparing to speak.

"What is it, Pilot?"

"It's the W/T office, sir. They can't transmit."

"Who's down there?"

"The leading tel., sir. The P.O. tel. was below." (That damned phrase again. If those two messes, the Chiefs' and the Petty Officers', were both written off, it was going to play hell with organizing the next move, whatever it was.) "But he knows what he's doing, sir," Haines went on. "The dynamo's been thrown off the board, but the set's had a hell of a knock anyway."

"Go down yourself and make sure." Haines, as well as being navigating officer, was an electrical expert, and this was in fact his department.

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Midshipman!"

"Sir?"

"Pass the word to the Gunnery Officer—"

"I'm here, sir." Guns' tall figure loomed up behind him. "I've been looking at 'A' gun."

"Well?"

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" It's finished, I'm afraid, sir."

Guns knew his job, and the Captain did not ask him to elaborate. Instead he said :

" I think we'll try a little offensive action while we're waiting, in case those —— come up to take a look at us." He considered. " Close up on ' X ' gun, go into local control, fire a spread of star-shell through this arc "—he indicated the port bow and beam—" and let fly if you see anything. I'll leave the details to you."

" Aye, aye, sir."

Guns clumped off down the ladder on his way aft. It was one of his idiosyncrasies to wear street-cleaner's thigh boots with thick wooden soles, and his movements up and down the ship were easily traceable, earning indeed a good deal of fluent abuse from people who were trying to get to sleep below.

As the heavy footfalls receded aft, the Captain stood up and leant over the port side of the bridge, staring down at the tumbling water. There was nothing to be seen of the main area of the damage, which was hidden by the outward flare of the bows ; but the ship had less freedom of movement now—she was deeper, more solidly settled in the water. They must have taken tons of it in the ripped-up spaces forward : the fo'c'sle covering them looked like a slowly crumbling ruin. It was about time the First Lieutenant came through with his report. If they had to—

" What's that ? " he asked suddenly.

A thin voice was calling, " Bridge, Bridge," from one of the voice-pipes. He bent down to the row nearest to him, but from none of them did the voice issue clearly. Behind him the midshipman was conducting the same search on his side. The voice went on calling, " Bridge, Bridge, Bridge," in a patient monotone. It was the Captain's servant, Bridger, who finally traced it—a voice-pipe low down on the deck, its anti-spray cover still clipped on.

The man bent down to it and snapped back the cover. " Bridge here."

A single murmured sentence answered him. Bridger looked up to the Captain. " It's the Engineer Officer, sir, speaking from the galley flat."

The Captain bent down. A waft of bitter fume-laden air met his nostrils. " Yes, Chief ? "

" I'm afraid Number One got caught by that last bulkhead, sir."

" What happened ? I heard it go a little while back."

" We thought it would hold, sir." The level voice, coming from the heart of the ruined fo'c'sle, had an apologetic note, as if the speaker, even in that shambles, had had the cool honesty to convict himself of an error of judgment. " It did look like holding for a bit, too. Number One was with the damage control party, between the seamen's mess-deck and the bathrooms. They'd shut the watertight door behind them, and were just going to shore up, when the forrard bulkhead went." Chief paused. " You know what it's like, sir. We can't get at them without opening up."

" Can't do that now, Chief."

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" No, sir."

" Can you hear anything ? "

" Not now."

" How many were there with the First Lieutenant ? "

" Fourteen, sir. Mostly stokers." There was another pause. " I took charge down here, sir. We're shoring up the next one."

" What do you think of it ? "

" Not too good. It's badly strained already, and leaking down one seam." There was, now, a slightly sharpened note in the voice travelling up from below. " There's a hell of a mess down here, sir. And if this one goes, that'll mean the whole lot."

" Yes, I know." The Captain thought quickly, while overhead and to port the sea was suddenly lit up by a cold yellow glare—the first spread of star-shell, four slowly dropping lights shadowing their spinning parachutes against the cloud overhead. Very pretty . . . The news from below could hardly have been worse : it added up to fully a third of the ship flooded, all the forward mess-decks cut off, fourteen men drowned at one stroke, and God knows how many more caught by the original explosion. " Look here, Chief, I don't want any more men lost like that. You must use your own judgment about getting out in a hurry. See how the shoring up goes, and let me know as soon as you can if you think it'll hold."

" All right, sir."

" We're firing star-shell at the moment, to see if there's anything on the surface. ' X ' gun may be firing independently, any time from now on."

" All right, sir."

" Take care of yourself, Chief."

He could almost hear the other man smiling at what was, from the Captain, an unexpected remark. " I'll do that, sir."

The voice-pipe went dead. Walking back to his chair, the Captain allowed himself a moment of profound depression and regret. The First Lieutenant gone. A good kid, doing his first big job in the Navy and tremendously keen to do it properly. With a young wife, too—the three of them had had dinner at the Adelphi in Liverpool, not two weeks ago. There was a bad letter to be written there, later on. And the loss might make a deal of difference to the next few hours.

THE star-shell soared and dropped again. Sitting in his chair, waiting for Chief's report, listening to the green seas slapping and thumping against the side as *Marlborough* sagged downwind in the wave troughs with a new, ugly motion, he was under no illusions as to what the next few hours might bring, and the chances of that " bad letter " ever being written by himself.

But that was not what he was now concentrating on : that was not in the mapped-out programme . . . This was the moment for which the Navy had long been preparing him : for years his training and experience had had this precise occasion in view ; that was why he was a commander, and the Captain of *Marlborough* when she was hit. Taking charge, gauging chances, foreseeing the next eventuality and if

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necessary forestalling it—none of it could take him by surprise, any more than could the chapter headings of a favourite book. When the moment had arrived he had recognized it instantly, and the sequence of his behaviour had lain before him like a familiar pattern, of which he now had to take the tenth or twentieth tracing.

He had not been torpedoed before, but no matter: tucked away in his mind and brain there had always been a picture of a torpedoed ship, and of himself as, necessarily, the key figure in this picture. Now that the curtain was drawn, and the image became the reality, he simply had to play his assigned part with as much intelligence, skill, and endurance as he could muster. The loss of the First Lieutenant and over half the ship's company already was a bitter stroke, both personally and professionally: it would return in full force later; but for the moment it was only a debit item which had to be fitted into the evolving picture.

"Signalman!"

"Sir."

"Get the Gunnery Officer on the quarter-deck telephone."

A pause. More star-shell, reflected on a waste of cold tumbling water, dropped slowly till they were drowned in darkness again. There wasn't really much point in going on with the illumination now: the U-boat probably thought they had other ships in company ready to counter-attack, and had sheered off. She had, indeed, cause to be satisfied, without pursuing the advantage further . . .

"Gunnery Officer on the telephone, sir."

The Captain took the proffered receiver. "Guns?"

"Yes, sir?"

"I'm afraid Number One has been killed. I want you to take over."

"Oh—all right, sir."

Hearing the shocked surprise in his voice, the Captain remembered that the two of them had been very good friends. But that, again, was something to be considered later: only the bald announcement was part of the present pattern. He continued:

"I think you had better stay aft, as if we were still at full action stations. Chief is in charge of damage control forrard. Stop star-shell now—I take it you've seen nothing."

"Nothing, sir."

"Right. You'd better have all the depth-charges set to safe—in fact have the primers withdrawn and dropped over the side. And I want someone to have a look at our draught-marks aft."

"I've just had them checked, sir. There's nothing to go on, I'm afraid: they're right clear of the water."

"Are the screws out of the water, too?"

"Can't see in this light, sir. The top blades, probably."

"Right. Get going on those depth-charges."

The Captain handed back the receiver, at the same time saying to the signalman: "Get your confidential books in the weighted bags, ready for ditching. And tell the W/T office to do the same."

"Aye, aye, sir."

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"Bridger."

"Yes, sir."

"Go down and get the black hold-all, and come back here."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Bridger's tough, unemotional expression did not alter, but his shoulders stiffened instinctively. He knew what the order meant. The black hold-all was, in his own phrase, the scram-bag: it held a bottle of brandy, morphine ampoules, a first-aid kit, some warm clothes, and a few personal papers. It had been tucked away in a corner of the skipper's cabin for nearly three years. It was as good as a ticket over the side. They'd start swimming any moment now.

The report from aft about the draught-marks had certainly quickened the tempo a little: his orders to Bridger and to the signalman were an endorsement of this. But quick tempo or slow, there was still the same number of things to be fitted into the available time, the same number of lines in the pattern to be traced.

Now, in the darkness, as he turned to the next task, very little noise or movement reached the bridge from anywhere in the ship: only a sound of hammering from deep below (the damage control party busy on their shoring job), a voice calling "Take a turn, there," as the whaler was swung out, the endless thump and surge of the waves driving down wind—only these were counter distractions in the core of heart and brain which the bridge had now become. Indeed, the Captain was much less conscious of these than of the heavy breathing of Adams, the Chief Bosun's Mate, who stood by his elbow as close and attentive as a spaniel at the butts.

Adams had heard the order to Bridger, and had guessed what it meant: it had aroused, not his curiosity—matters were past such a faint reaction as curiosity now—but the same tough determination as the Captain himself had felt. They were both men of the same stamp: seamen first, human beings afterwards; the kind of men whom *Marlborough*, in her extremity, most needed and most deserved.

"Mid!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Go along to the sick bay, and—"

One of the voice-pipe bells rang sharply. The midshipman listened for a moment, and then said: "That's the doctor now, sir."

The Captain bent down. "Yes, doc?"

"I wanted to report about casualties, sir."

"What's the position?"

"I've got nine down here, sir. Burns, mostly. One stoker with a broken arm. I got a stretcher-party organized, and brought them down aft."

"I was hoping there'd be more."

"Afraid not, sir."

"Do you need any hands to help you?"

"No, I'm all right, sir. I've got one sick-berth attendant—Jamieson was caught forrard, I'm afraid—and the leading steward is giving a hand."

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"Very well. But you'll have to start moving them, I'm afraid. Get them on the upper deck, on the lee side. Ask Guns to lend you some hands from 'X' gun."

There was a pause. Then the doctor's voice came through again, more hesitantly. "They shouldn't really be moved, sir, unless—"

"That's what I meant. You understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Send the walking cases up to the boat-deck, and see to the others yourself. Divide them up between the two boats. I'll leave the details to you."

"Very well, sir."

Thank God for a good doctor, anyway—as bored, cynical, and impatient as most naval doctors were for three-quarters of their time, with nothing to do but treat warts and censor the mail: and then, on an occasion like this, summoning all the resource and skill that had been kept idle, and throwing them instantly into the breach. The doctor was going to be an asset during the next few hours. So, indeed, was every officer and man left to the ship.

He would have liked to muster the remaining hands, to see how many the explosion had caught and how many he had left to work with; but that would disrupt things too much, at a time when there must be no halting in the desperate race to save the ship or, at least, as many of the remaining lives as possible. But as he sat back in his chair, waiting for what he was now almost sure must happen, the Captain reviewed his officers one by one, swiftly tabulating their work at this moment, speculating whether they could be better employed.

Number One was gone, of course. Guns in charge aft, Haines in the wireless office (time he was back, incidentally). Chief working the damage control party—that was technically his responsibility anyway, and there was a first-class Chief E.R.A. in charge of the engine-room. The Mid here on the bridge. The doctor with his hands full in the sick bay. Merrett—the Captain frowned suddenly.

Where the devil was Merrett? He'd forgotten all about him—and indeed it was easy to overlook the shy, newly joined sub who had startled the wardroom on his first night by remarking: "My father went to prison as a conscientious objector during the last war, so he's rather ashamed of me in this one," but had then relapsed into the negative, colourless attitude which seemed natural to him. Where had he got to now?

The Captain repeated the query aloud to the midshipman.

"I haven't seen him at all, sir," the latter answered. "He was in the wardroom when I came on watch. Shall I call them up?"

"Yes, do."

After a moment at one of the voice-pipes the midshipman came through with the answer: "He was there a moment ago, sir. They think he's on the upper deck somewhere."

"Send one of the bosun's mates to—" The Captain paused. No, that might not be a good move. "See if you can find him, Mid, and ask him to come up here."

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WHEN the midshipman had left the bridge the Captain frowned again. Why in God's name had Merrett been in the wardroom a moment ago? What was he doing there at a time like this? Any sort of alarm or crisis meant that officers went to their action stations automatically: Merrett should have gone first to "A" gun, where he was in charge, and then, as that was out of action, up to the bridge for orders. Now all that was known of him was that he had been in the wardroom, right aft.

The Captain hoped there was a good explanation, not the attack of nerves or the breakdown of self-control he had been guessing at when he sent the midshipman to find Merrett. He could understand such a thing happening—the boy was barely twenty, and this was his first ship—but they just could not afford it now.

His guess had been right: so much became obvious as soon as Merrett was standing in front of him. Even in the darkness, with the exact expression on his face blurred and shadowed, he seemed to manifest an almost exalted state of terror. The movements of foot and hand, the twitching shoulders, the slight, uncontrolled chattering of the teeth, the shine of sweat on the forehead—all were here, a distillation of fear which would, in full daylight, have been horrible to look at. So that was it . . .

For a moment the Captain hesitated, trying to balance their present crucial danger, and his own controlled reaction to it, against the almost unknown feelings of a boy, a landsman-turned-sailor, confronted with the same ordeal; but then the overriding necessity of everyone on board doing his utmost, swept away any readiness to make allowances for failure in this respect. The details, the pros and cons, the fine-drawn questions could wait; nothing but one hundred per cent effectiveness would suffice now, and that was what he must re-establish.

"Where have you been?" he asked curtly.

Merrett swallowed, looked across the shattered fo'c'sle to the wild sea, and drew no comfort or reassurance from it. He said, in a dry strained voice: "I'm sorry, sir. I didn't know what to do, exactly."

"Then you should come and ask me. Do you expect me to come and tell you?" It was rough: it was, in Merrett's present state, brutally so: but it was clearly dictated by the situation they were in. "Where were you when we were hit?"

"I'd just gone up to 'A' gun, sir."

"Must have shaken you up a bit." So much allowance, and no more, did the Captain make for what he could only guess at now—youth, uncertainty, self-distrust, perhaps an inherited horror of violence. "But I don't want to have to send for individual officers at a time like this. You understand?"

"Yes, sir." It was a whisper, almost a sigh. He'd been drinking whisky, too, the Captain thought. Well, that didn't matter as long as it had the right result; and this, and the tonic effect of giving him a definite job to do, could be put to the test now.

"Very well . . . There's something I want you to do," he went on, changing his tone in such a way as to indicate clearly that a fresh start

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could now be made. " Go down to the boat-deck and see how they're getting on with the boats. They're to be swung out ready for lowering, and all the rafts cleared away as well. You'd better check up on the boats' crews, too : remember we've only got this one watch of seamen to play with, so far as we know. You'll want a coxswain, a stoker, and a bowman told off for the motor-boat, and a coxswain and a bowman for the whaler. Got that ? "

" Yes, sir."

It seemed that he had : already he was making some attempt to take a grip on his body, and his voice was more under control. Watching him turn and make for the bridge-ladder, the Captain felt ready to bet that he would make a good job of it. The few minutes had not been wasted.

But they had been no more than an odd, irrelevant delay in the main flow of the current ; and now, in quick succession, as if to re-establish the ordained pace of disaster, three more stages came and were passed.

Bridger appeared with the black hold-all, and with something else which he handed to the Captain almost furtively. " Better have this, sir," he said, as the Captain's hand closed over it. It was his safety-light, which he had forgotten to clip on to his life-jacket—one of the small watertight bulk-and-battery sets which were meant to be plugged in and switched on when in the water. The Captain took it with a grunt and fastened it on, his eyes turned instinctively to the black expanse of water washing and swirling round them. Yes, better have the light ready . . .

Then Haines came up the ladder from below, starting to speak almost before he was on the bridge :

" I'm afraid they were right about the W/T set, sir," he began. " It's finished. And the main switchboard has blown, too. Even if we got the dynamo back on the board—"

" All right, Pilot," said the Captain suddenly. And then, to the figure he had discerned at the top of the ladder, the third messenger of evil, he said : " Yes, Chief ? "

The engineer officer did not speak until he was standing close by the Captain, but there was no hesitation about his opening words. " I don't think it's any good, sir." He spoke with a clipped intensity, which did not disguise an exhaustion of spirit. " That bulkhead—it might go any minute, and she'll probably break in two when it happens. That means a lot more men caught, sir."

" You've shored up completely ? "

" Yes, sir. But the space is too big, and the bulkhead was warped too much before we got the shores to it. It's working badly already. I can't see it holding more than another hour, if that."

" It's the last one worth shoring," said the Captain, almost to himself.

" Yes, sir." Chief hesitated. " I've still seven or eight hands down in the engine-room, I'd like to get them out in good time. Is that all right, sir ? "

Chief was looking at him. They were all looking at him—Haines,

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the midshipman, the signalman, Adams, the look-outs, the hard-breathing Bridger—all waiting for the one plain order, which they now knew must come.

Until that moment he had been refusing to look squarely at this order as it drew nearer and nearer ; he could not believe that his loved ship must be given up, and even now, as he hesitated, and the men round him wondered, the idea still had no sort of reality about it. For this man on whom they all relied, this man to whom they attributed no feelings or qualities apart from the skill and forethought of seamanship, was not quite the stock figure, the thirty-eight-year-old R.N. commander, that they took him to be.

True, he fitted the normal mould well enough. He had always done so, from Dartmouth onwards, and the progress from midshipman to commander had followed its appointed course—twenty years of naval routine in which a mistake, a stepping-out-of-line, would have denied him his present rank. He never had stepped out of line : he had been, and still was, normal about everything except this ship ; but for her he had a special feeling, a romantic conception, which would have astounded the men waiting round him. It was not the Navy, or his high sense of duty, or the fact that he commanded her, which had given him this feeling : it was love.

THE old *Marlborough* . . . The Captain was not married, and if he had been it might not have made any difference : he was profoundly and exclusively in love with this ship, and the passion, fed especially on the dangers and ordeals of the past three war-years, left no room for a rival. It had started in 1926, when she was brand new and he had commissioned her : it had been his first job as First Lieutenant, and his proudest so far. She had been the very latest in ships then—a new sloop, Clyde-built, twin turbines, two four-inch guns (the twin mountings came later), and a host of gadgets and items of novel equipment which were sharp on the palate . . .

There had been other ships, of course, in the sixteen years between ; his first command had been a river gun-boat, his second a destroyer : but he had never forgotten *Marlborough*. He had kept an eye on her all the time, checking her movements as she transferred from the Home Fleet to the Mediterranean, thence to the China Station, then home again : looking up her officers in the Navy List and wondering if they were taking proper care of her : making a special trip up to Rosyth on one of his leaves, to have another look at her ; and when, at the outbreak of war, he had been given command of her, it had been like coming home again, to someone dearly loved who was not yet past the honeymoon stage.

She was not, in point of fact, much of a command for a commander, even as the senior ship of an escort group, and he could have done better if he had wished. But he did not wish. Old-fashioned she might be, battered with much hard driving, none too comfortable, at least three knots slower than the job really demanded ; but she could still show her teeth and she still ran as sweet as a sewing machine, and the last three years had been the happiest of his career.

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He was intensely jealous of her efficiency when contrasted with more up-to-date ships, and he went to endless trouble over this, intriguing for the fitting of new equipment "for experimental purposes," demanding the replacement of officers or key-ratings if any weak point in the team began to show itself. In three years of North Atlantic convoy work he had spared neither himself nor his ship's company any of the intense strain which the job imposed; but *Marlborough* he had nursed continuously, so that the prodigious record of hours steamed and miles covered had cost the minimum of wear.

He knew her from end to end, not only with the efficient "technical" eye of the man who had watched the last five months of her building, but with an added, intimate regard for every part of her, a loving admiration, an eye tenderly blind to her short-comings.

Now she was going. No wonder he could not phrase that final order, no wonder he stared back almost angrily at the Chief, delaying what he knew must happen, waiting for the miracle to forestall it.

Up to the bridge came a new, curious noise. It came from deep within the fo'c'sle, a blend of thud and iron clang which coincided with the ship's rolling. Something very solid must have broken adrift down there, either through the shock or the unusual level of their trim, and was now washing to and fro out of control.

Chief, his face puckered, tried to place it; it might have been any one of a dozen bits of heavy equipment in the forward store. The big portable pump, most likely. There must be the hell of a mess down there. Men and gear smashing up together—it hardly bore thinking of. And the noise was unnerving; it sounded like the toll of a bell, half sunk, tied to a wreck and washing with the tide. A damned sight too appropriate.

The Captain said suddenly: "I'll come down and look at that bulkhead, Chief. Haines, take over here." He turned to Adams. "You come with me. Bring one of the quartermasters, too."

There might be some piping to do in a hurry.

The journey down, deck by deck, had the same element of compulsion in it as, in a nightmare, distinguishes the random lunatic journey which can only lead to some inescapable horror at its end. The boat-deck was crowded: two loaded stretchers lay near the whaler, the figures on them not more than vague impressions of pain in the gloom: Merrett was directing the unlashing of a raft near by: on the lee side of the funnel a dozen hands, staring out at the water, were singing "Home on the Range," in low-pitched chorus.

The small party—Captain, Chief, Adams, the quartermaster—made their way aft, past the figures grouped round "X" gun, and down another ladder. At the iron-deck level, a few feet from the water, all was deserted. "I sent the damage control party up, as soon as we'd finished, sir," the Chief said, as he stepped through the canvas screen into the alley-way leading forward. "There was nothing else for them to do."

Under cover now, the four of them moved along the rocking passage: Chief's torch picking out the way, flicking from side to side of the hollow tunnel against which the water was already lapping.

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Under their stumbling scraping feet the slope led fatally downwards. The clanging toll seemed to advance to meet them.

They passed the entrance to the engine-room : just within, feet straddled on the grating, stood a young stoker, the link with the outside world in case the bridge voice-pipe failed. To him, as they passed, the Chief said : " No orders yet. I'll be coming back in a minute," and the stoker drew back into the shadows to pass the message on.

Then they came to a closed watertight door, and this they eased slowly open, a clip at a time, so that any pressure of water within would show immediately. But it was still dry . . . the door swung back, and they stepped inside the last watertight space that lay between floating and sinking.

It was dimly lit, by two battery lanterns clipped to overhead brackets : the light struck down on a tangle of joists and beams, heel-pieces, wedges, cross-battens—the work of the damage-control party. The deck was wet underfoot, and as *Marlborough* rolled some inches of dirty water slopped from side to side, carrying with it a scummy flotsam of caps, boots, and ditty-boxes.

The Captain switched on his torch, ducked under a transverse beam, and stepped up close to the bulkhead. It was as Chief had said, in bad shape ; bulging towards him, strained and leaking all down one seam, responding to the ship's movements with a long-drawn-out, harsh creaking. For a single moment, as he watched it, he seemed to be looking through into the space beyond, where Number One and his fourteen damage control hands had been caught.

The forbidden picture—forbidden in the strict scheme of his captaincy—gave place to another one, conjured up in its turn by the clanging which now sounded desperately loud and clear : the three flooded mess-decks underneath his feet, the sealed-off shambles of the explosion area.

Then his mind swung back, guiltily, to the only part of it that mattered now, the shored-up section he was standing in, and he nodded to himself as he glanced round it once more. It confirmed what he had been expecting but had only now faced fairly and squarely: Chief had done a good job, but it just wasn't good enough.

He turned quickly. " All right, Chief. Bring your engine-room party out on to the upper deck. Adams ! Pipe ' Hands to stations for—' "

The words " Abandon ship " were cut off by a violent explosion above their heads.

FOR a moment the noise was so puzzling that he could not assign it to anything : it was just an interruption, almost supernatural, which had stopped him finishing that hated sentence. Then another piece of the pattern clicked into place, and he said : " That was a shell, by God ! " and made swiftly for the doorway.

Outside, he called back over his shoulder : " Chief—see to the door again ! " and then started to run. His footsteps rang in the confined space : he heard Adams following close behind him down

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the passageway, the noise echoing and clattering all round him, urging him on.

Reaching the open air at last was like escaping from a nightmare into a sweating wakefulness which must somehow be instantly co-ordinated and controlled. As he went up the ladder to the boat-deck there was a brilliant flash and another explosion up on the bridge, followed by the sharp reek of the shell-burst. Damned good shooting from somewhere . . . something shot past his head and spun into a ventilator with a loud clang.

He began to run again, brushing close by a figure making for " X " gun shouting, " Close up again ! Load star-shell ! " Guns, at least, had his part of it under control.

He passed the space between the two boats. It was here, he saw, that the first shell had struck : the motor-boat was damaged, one of the stretchers was overturned, and there were three separate groups of men bending over figures stretched out on deck. He wanted to stop and find out how bad the damage was, and, especially, how many men had been killed or hurt, but he could not : the bridge called him, and had the prior claim.

It was while he was climbing quickly up the ladder that he realized that the moon had now risen, low in the sky, and that *Marlborough* must be cleanly silhouetted against the horizon. If no one on the upper deck had seen the flash of the submarine's firing, the moon ought to give them a line on her position. Guns would probably work out that for himself. But it would be better to make sure.

Now he was at the top of the ladder, his eyes grown accustomed to the gloom, his nostrils assailed by the acrid stink of the explosion. The shell he had seen land when he first came out on deck had caught the bridge fair and square, going through one wing and exploding against the chart-house.

Only two men were still on their feet—the signalman and one of the look-outs : the other look-out was lying, headless, against his machine-gun mounting. Adams, at his shoulder, drew in his breath sharply at the sight, but the Captain's eyes had already moved farther on, to where three other figures—who must be Haines, the midshipman, and the messenger—had fallen in a curiously theatrical grouping round the compass platform. The light there was too dim to show any details : the dark shambles could only be guessed at. But one of the figures was still moving. It was the midshipman, clinging to a voice-pipe and trying to hoist himself upright.

He said quickly : " Lie still, Mid," and then : " Signalman, give me the hailer," and lastly, to Adams : " Do what you can for them." He caught sight of the young, shocked face of the other look-out staring at him, and he called out sharply : " Don't look in-board. Watch your proper arc. Use your glasses." Then he switched on the microphone, and spoke into it :

" ' X ' gun, ' X ' gun—illuminate away from the moon—illuminate away from the moon." He paused, then continued : " Doctor or sick-berth attendant report to the bridge now—doctor or sick-berth attendant."

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Pity had inclined him to put the last order first: the instinct of command had told him otherwise. But almost before he stopped speaking, the sharp crack of "X" gun came from aft, and the star-shell soared. Guns had had the same idea as himself.

Adams, who was kneeling down and working away at a rough tourniquet, said over his shoulder:

"Shall I carry on with that pipe, sir?"

"No. Wait."

The U-boat coming to the surface had altered everything. The ship was now only a platform for 'X" gun, and not to be abandoned while "X" gun still had work to do.

As the star-shell burst and hung, lighting up the grey moving sea, the Captain raised his glasses and swept the arc of water that lay on their beam. Almost immediately he saw the U-boat, stopped on the surface, broadside on to them and not more than a mile away. Before he had time to speak over the hailer, or give any warning, there was a noise from aft as Guns shouted a fresh order; and then things happened very quickly.

"X" gun roared. A spout of water, luminous under the star-shell, leapt upwards, just beyond the U-boat and dead in line—a superb sighting shot, considering the suddenness of this new crisis.

There was a pause, while the Captain's mind raced over the two possibilities now open—that the U-boat, guessing she had only a badly crippled ship to deal with, would fight it out on the surface, or that she would submerge to periscope depth and fire another torpedo. Then came the next shot, to settle all his doubts.

It came from both ships, and it was almost farcically conclusive. The flash of both guns was instantaneous. The U-boat's shell exploded aft, right on "X" gun, ripping the whole platform to pieces; but from the U-boat herself a brilliant orange flash spurted suddenly, to be succeeded by the crump of an explosion. Then she disappeared completely.

"X" gun, mortally wounded itself, had made its last shot a mortal one for the enemy.

Silence now over all the ship, save for a faint moaning from aft. The Captain reached for the hailer, and then paused. No point in saying anything at this moment: they would be looking after "X" gun's crew, what was left of them, and there was no more enemy to deal with. He listened for a moment to Adams's heavy breathing as he bent over the midshipman, and then turned as a figure showed itself at the top of the bridge-ladder.

"Captain, sir."

"What is it?"

"S.B.A., sir. The doctor's gone aft to the gun."

"All right. Bear a hand here. Who's that behind you?"

"It's me, sir," said Bridger's voice from the top of the ladder. "I was helping the S.B.A."

"Were you up here when the second shell landed?"

"No sir—just missed it." Bridger sounded competent and unsurprised, as if he had arranged the thing that way. "I went

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down to give them a hand when the first one hit the boat-deck, sir."

"How much damage down there?"

"Killed three of the lads, sir." The sick-berth attendant's voice breaking in was strained and rather uneven. "Mr. Merrett's gone, too. He was just by the motor-boat."

Another officer lost. Guns had probably been killed, too. That meant—the Captain checked suddenly, running over the list in his mind. Number One, caught by that bulkhead. Haines and the midshipman finished up here; Merrett gone, dying typically in a quiet corner, escaping his notice. Guns almost certainly killed at "X" gun. That meant that there were no executive officers left at all: only Chief and the doctor.

If they didn't abandon ship—if somehow they got her going again—it would be an almost impossible job, singlehanded . . . He put the thought on one side for the moment, and said to the sick-berth attendant:

"Take over from Petty Officer Adams. Have a look at the others first, and then get the midshipman aft to the wardroom."

He waited again, as the man got to work. The heavy clanging from below, which had stopped momentarily when the gun was fired, now started once more. Presently the doctor came up to the bridge, to report what he had been expecting to hear—that Guns, and the whole crew of seven, had been killed by the last shot from the U-boat. Even though he had been prepared for it, it was impossible to hear the news with indifference. But for some reason it confirmed a thought which had been growing in his mind, ever since the U-boat had been sunk. They were on their own now, and the only danger was from the sea.

His loved *Marlborough* had survived so much, had produced such a brilliant last-minute counter-stroke, that he could not leave her now. Reason told him to carry on with the order he had given down below, but reason seemed to have had no part in the last few minutes: something else, some product of heart and instinct, seemed to have taken control of them all. That last shot of "X" gun had been a miracle. Suppose there were more miracles on the way?

Adams, straightening up as the sick-berth attendant took over, once again tried, respectfully, to recall the critical moment to him:

"Carry on with that pipe, sir?"

"No." The Captain, divining the uncertainty in the man's mind, smiled in the darkness. "No, Adams, I hadn't forgotten. But we'll wait till daylight."

THERE were fourteen hours till daylight: fourteen hours to review that decision, to ascribe it correctly either to emotion or to a reasonable assessment of chance, and to foresee the outcome.

What struck the Captain most strongly about it was the unprofessional aspect of what he had done. Down there in the shored-up fo'c'sle, he had made a precise, technical examination of the damage and the repairs to it, and come to a clear decision: if the U-boat's shell had not hit them, and interrupted the order, they would now be sitting in the boats, lying off in the darkness and waiting for

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Marlborough to go down. But something had intervened : not simply the absolute necessity of fighting the U-boat as long as possible, not even second thoughts on their chances of keeping the ship afloat, but something stronger still.

It was so long since the Captain had changed his mind about any personal or professional decision that he hardly knew how to analyse it. But certainly the change of mind was there.

He could find excuses for it now, though not very adequate ones. Daylight would give them more chance to survey the damage properly. (But he had done that already.) With the motor-boat wrecked by the first shell-burst, there were not enough boats for the crew to take to. (But some of them would always have to use rafts anyway, and if *Marlborough* sank they would have no choice in the matter.) They had a number of badly wounded men on board who must be sheltered for as long as possible, if they were not to die of neglect or exposure. (But they certainly stood more chance of surviving an orderly abandonment of the ship, rather than a last-minute emergency retreat.)

No, none of these ideas had really any part in it. It boiled down to nothing more precise than a surge of feeling which had attacked him as soon as the U-boat was sunk : a foolish emotional idea, product both of the past years and of this last tremendous stroke, that after *Marlborough* had done so much for them they could not leave her to die. It wasn't an explanation which would look well in the Report of Proceedings ; but it was as near the truth as he could phrase it.

The answer would come with daylight, anyway : till then he must wait. If the bulkhead held, and the weather moderated, and Chief was able to get things going again (that main switchboard would have to be rewired, for a start), then they might be able to do something : creep southwards, perhaps, till they were athwart the main convoy route and could get help.

It was the longest chance he had ever taken : sitting there in his chair up on the bridge, brooding in the darkness, he tried to visualize its successive stages. Funnier things had happened at sea . . . But the final picture, the one that remained with him all that night, was of a ship—his ship—drawing thirty-two feet forward and nothing aft, drifting helplessly down wind with little prospect of surviving till daylight.

No one ashore knew anything about them, and no one would start worrying for at least three days.

Within the ship, ignoring and somehow isolating itself against this preposterous weight of odds, there was much to do ; and with no officers to call on except the doctor, who was busy with casualties, and the Chief, whom he left to make a start in the engine-room, the Captain set to work to organize it himself.

He kept Bridger by him, to relay orders, and a signalman, in case something unexpected happened (there was a faint chance of an aircraft on passage being in their area, and within signalling distance) : Adams was installed as a virtual First Lieutenant ; and from this nucleus the control and routine of the ship was set in motion again.

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The bulkhead he could do nothing about: Chief set to work on the main switchboard, the first step towards raising steam again, and the leading telegraphist was working on the wireless transmitter; the boats and rafts were left in instant readiness, and the more severe casualties taken back under cover again. A hard decision, this; but to keep them on the upper deck in this bitter weather was a degree nearer killing them than running the risk of trapping them below.

Among the casualties was the midshipman, still alive after a cruel lacerated wound in the chest and now in the sick bay waiting for a blood transfusion. The bodies of the other three who had been killed on the bridge—Haines, the look-out, and the bridge messenger—had been taken aft to the quarter-deck, to join the rest, from "X" gun's crew and the party on the boat-deck, awaiting burial.

Then, after a spell of cleaning up, which included the chaos of loose gear and ammunition round "A" gun, which had been directly over the explosion, the Captain told Adams to muster what was left of the ship's company and report the numbers. He was still in his chair on the bridge, sipping a mug of cocoa, which Bridger had cooked up in the wardroom pantry, when Adams came up with his report, and he listened to the details with an attention which he tried to rid of all personal feeling.

These crude figures, which Adams, bending over the chart-table light, was reading out, were men, some of them well known and liked, some of them shipmates of two or three years' standing, all of them sailors; but from now on they must only be numbers, only losses on a chart of activity and endurance. The dead were not to be sailors any more: just "missing potential," "negative assets"—some damned phrase like that.

Adams said: "I've written it all down, sir, as well as I could." He had, in his voice, the same matter-of-fact impersonal tone as the Captain would have used: the words "as well as I could" might have referred to some trifling clerical inconvenience instead of the difficulty of sorting out the living, the dead, and the dying in the pitch darkness. "There's the ones we know about, first. There's three officers and twelve ratings killed—that's the Gunnery Officer, Lieutenant Haines, and Mr. Merrett, and the gun's crew and the ones on the boat-deck and the two up here. The surgeon-lieutenant has one officer and sixteen men in the sick bay. We'll have to count most of them out, I'm afraid, sir. Nine of them were out of the fo'c'sle. Then there's"—he paused—"one officer and seventy-four men missing."

He stopped again, expecting the Captain to say something, but as no word came from the dark figure in the chair he went on: "Then what we've got left, sir. There's yourself, and the surgeon-lieutenant, and the engineer—that's three officers, and twenty-eight men out of the Red Watch, the one that was on duty."

"Twenty-eight. Is that all?"

"That's all, sir. They lost seven seamen at 'X' gun, three by the boats, and two here. Then there's seven of them down in the sick bay. That's forty-seven altogether."

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"How are the twenty-eight made up? How many seamen have we?"

Adams straightened up and turned round from the table. This part of it he evidently knew by heart. "There's myself, sir, and Leading Seaman Tapper, and seven A.B.s: the quartermaster and the bosun's mate, that were in the wheel-house: and Bridger. That's twelve. Then there's the hands who were on watch in the W/T office: the leading tel. and two others, and two coders. That makes seventeen altogether. The signalman up here, eighteen. The S.B.A., nineteen. The leading steward, twenty."

"Any other stewards?"

"No, sir."

It didn't matter, thought the Captain: no officers, either.

"The rest were all engine-room branch, sir," Adams went on. "Eight of them altogether."

"How are they made up?"

"It's pretty good, sir, as far as experience goes. The Chief E.R.A. and one of the younger ones, and a stoker petty officer and five stokers. If it was just one watch they'd be all right. But of course there's no reliefs for them, and they'll have to be split into two watches if it comes to steaming."

Adams paused, on the verge of a question, but the Captain, seeing it coming, interrupted him. He didn't yet feel ready to discuss their chances of getting under way again.

"Just give me those figures again, Adams," he said, "as I say the headings. Let's have the fit men first."

Adams bent down to the light once more. "Yourself and two officers and twenty-eight men, sir."

"Killed and wounded?"

Adams added quickly: "Four officers and twenty-eight."

"And missing, the First Lieutenant and seventy-four." He had no need to be reminded of that item: that "seventy-four" would stay with him always. Not counting the accident to Number One's damage control party, there must have been sixty men killed or cut off by the first explosion. All of them still there, deep down underneath his feet. Twenty-eight left out of a hundred and thirty.

Whatever he was able to do with the *Marlborough* now, the weight of those figures could never be lightened.

"WILL I make some more cocoa, sir?" said Bridger suddenly. He had been waiting in silence all this time, standing behind the Captain's chair. The numbers and details which Adams had produced, even though they concerned Bridger's own messmates, were real to him only so far as they affected the Captain: this moment, he judged instinctively, was the worst so far, and he tried to dissipate it in the only way open to him.

The Captain's figure, which had been hunched deep in the chair, straightened suddenly. He shook himself. The cold air was stiffening his legs, and he stood up.

"No, thanks, Bridger," he answered. "I'm going to turn in, in a

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minute. Bring up my sleeping-bag and a pillow, and I'll sleep in the asdic hut."

"Aye, aye, sir." Bridger clumped off at a solid workmanlike pace, his heavy sea-boots ringing their way down the ladder. The Captain turned to Adams again.

"We'd better work out a routine for the time between now and daylight," he said briskly. "We can leave the engine-room out of it for the moment: they're busy enough. You'd better arrange the seamen in two watches: the telegraphists and coders can work in with them, except for the leading tel.—he can stay on the set. Send half the hands off watch now: they can sleep in the wardroom alleyway or on the upper deck, whichever they prefer. The rest can carry on with cleaning up."

"The doctor may want some help down there, sir."

"Yes—see about that too . . . Keep two look-outs on the upper deck for the rest of tonight: tell them they're listening for aircraft as well. We'll show an Aldis lamp if we hear anything, and chance it being hostile. You'd better put the signalman up here, with those instructions; and pick out the most intelligent coder, and have him work watch-and-watch with the signalman. That's about all, I think. See that I'm called if anything happens."

"Do you want a hand to watch that bulkhead, sir?"

"No. The engine-room will cover that: they're nearest. About meals . . ." The Captain scratched his chin. "We'll just have to do our best with the wardroom pantry. There were some dry provisions in the after store, weren't there?"

"Corned beef and biscuits, sir, and some tinned milk, I think. And there's plenty of tea. We'll not go short."

"Right . . . That'll do for tonight, then. I'll see what things are like in the morning: there'll be plenty of squaring up to do. You'll have to get those bodies sewn up, too. If we do get under way again," the Captain tried, and failed, to say this in a normal voice, "you'll have to work out a scheme of guns' crews and look-outs and quarter-masters."

"Better take the wheel myself, sir."

The Captain smiled. "It won't exactly be fleet manœuvres, Adams."

The expected question came at last. "How much chance have we got, sir?"

"Hard to say." He answered it as unemotionally as he could. "You saw the state that bulkhead was in. It might go any time, or it might hold indefinitely. But even very slow headway would make a big difference to the strain on it, unless the bows stay rigid where they are, and take most of the weight. Almost everything depends on the weather."

As he said this, the arrangements he had been making with Adams receded into the background, and he became aware of the ship again, and of her sluggish motion under his feet. She was quieter now, certainly: no shock or grinding from below, no advertisement of distress. But he could feel, as if it were going on inside his own body,

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the strain on the whole ship, the anguish of that slow cumbersome roll down wind.

Earlier she had seemed to be dying: this now was the rallying process, infinitely painful both to endure and to watch.

Long after Adams had left the bridge, the Captain still stood there, suffering all that the ship suffered, aware that the only effective anæsthetic was death.

It was an idea which at any other time he would have dismissed as fanciful and ridiculous, unseamanlike as a poet talking of his soul. Now it was natural, deeply felt and deeply resented. His professional responsibility for *Marlborough* was transformed: he felt for her nothing save anger and pity.

JUST before he turned in, Chief came up from below to report progress.

He stood at the top of the ladder, a tired but not dispirited figure, and his voice had the old downright confidence on which the Captain had come to rely. He had been in *Marlborough* for nearly three years; as an engineering lieutenant he, too, could probably have got a better job, but he had never shown any signs of wanting one.

"We've made a good start on the switchboard, sir," he began. "We ought to get the fans going some time tomorrow." There was nothing in his tone to suggest the danger, which he must have felt all the time, of working deep down below decks at a time like this. "The boiler-room's in a bit of a mess—there's a lot of water about—but we'll clear that up as soon as we can get pressure on the pumps."

"What about the bulkhead, Chief?"

"It's about the same, sir. I've been in once myself, and I've a hand listening all the time outside the next watertight door. There's nothing to report there." He turned, and looked behind him down the length of the ship, and then up at the sky. "She seems a lot easier, sir."

"Yes, the wind's going down."

The phrase was like a blessing.

"By God, we'll do it yet!" Chief, preparing to go down again, slurred his feet along the deck and found it sticky. "Bit of a mess here," he commented.

"Blood," said the Captain shortly. "They haven't cleaned up yet."

"We're going to be pretty short-handed," said Chief, following a natural train of thought. "But that's tomorrow's worry. Good night, sir."

"Good night, Chief. Get some sleep if you can."

But later he himself found sleep almost impossible to achieve, weary as he was after nearly nine hours on the bridge. He lay in his sleeping-bag on the hard floor of the asdic hut, feeling underneath him the trials and tremors of the ship's painful labouring. It was very cold.

Poor *Marlborough*, he thought, losing between waking and sleeping the full control of his thoughts. Poor old *Marlborough*. We shouldn't

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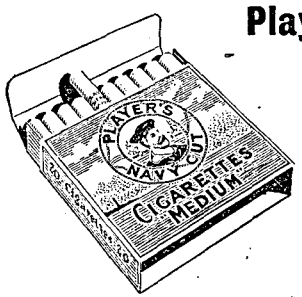
Whatever the pleasure

Player's complete it



Player's Please

[NCC 784] PLAYER'S NAVY CUT CIGARETTES & TOBACCO

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do this to you. None of us should : not us, or the Germans, or those poor chaps washing about in the fo'c'sle. No ship deserved an ordeal as evil as this. Only human beings, immeasurably base, deserved such punishment.

BRIDGER woke him at first light, with a mug of tea and an insinuating " Seven o'clock, sir ! " so normal as to make him smile. But the smile was not much more than a momentary flicker. Under him he felt the ship very slowly rolling to and fro, without will and without protest : she seemed more a part of the sea itself than a separate burden on it. The weather must have moderated a lot, but *Marlborough* might be deeper in the water as well.

Cold and stiff, he lay for a few minutes before getting up, collecting his thoughts and remembering what was waiting for him outside the asdic hut.

It would be bitterly cold, possibly wet as well : the ship would seem deformed and ugly, the damage meeting his eyes at every turn : the blood on the bridge would be dried black. All over the upper deck there would be men, grey-faced and shivering, waking to face the day : not cheerful and noisy as they usually were, but dully astonished that the ship was still afloat and that they had survived so far ; unwilling, even, to meet each other's eyes, in the embarrassment of fear and disbelief of the future.

And there were those other men down in the fo'c'sle, who would not wake.

There were the burials to see to.

There was the bulkhead.

He got up.

The bulkhead first, with the Chief and Adams. The rating outside the watertight door said : " Haven't heard anything, sir," in a non-committal way, as if he did not really believe that they were not all wasting their time.

He was a young stoker : sixteen men in his mess had been caught forward : no hope of any sort had yet been communicated to him. Noting this, the Captain thought : I'll have to talk to them, some time this morning . . .

Inside, things were as before : there was a little more water, and the atmosphere was now thick and sour : but nothing had shifted, and with the decrease in the ship's rolling the bulkhead itself was rigid, without sound or movement.

" I think it's even improved a bit, sir," said the Chief. He ran his hand down the central seam, which before had been leaking : his fingers now came away dry. " This seems to have worked itself watertight again. If we could alter the trim a bit, so that even part of this space is above the water-line, we might be able to save it."

" That's going to be today's job," said the Captain, " moving everything we can aft, so as to bring her head up a bit. I'll go into details when we get outside."

On his way back he visited the boiler- and engine-rooms. The boiler-room was deserted, and already cooling fast : here again the

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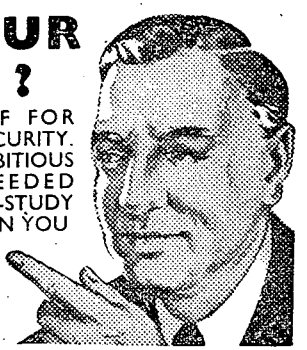

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forward bulkhead was a tangle of shores and joists, braced against the angle-pieces that joined the frames.

"What about this one?" he asked.

"Doesn't seem to be any strain on it, sir," Chief answered. "I think the space next to it—that's the drying-room and the small bosun's store—must still be watertight."

The Captain nodded without saying anything. He was beginning to feel immensely and unreasonably cheerful, but to communicate that feeling to anyone else seemed frivolous in the extreme. There was so little to go on: it might all be a product of what he felt about the ship herself, and unfit to be shared with anyone.

The engine-room was very much alive. Two men—the Chief E.R.A. and a young telegraphist—were working on the main switchboard: the telegraphist, lying flat on his back behind it, was pulling through a length of thick insulated cable and connecting it up. Two more hands were busy on one of the main steam valves. There was an air of purpose here, of men who knew clearly what the next job was to be, and how to set about it.

The Chief E.R.A., an old pensioner with a smooth bald head in odd contrast with the craggy wrinkles of his face, smiled when he saw the Captain. They came from the same Kentish village, and the Chief E.R.A.'s appointment to *Marlborough* had been the biggest wangle the Captain had ever undertaken. But it had been justified a score of times in the last two years, and obviously it was in process of being

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justified again now.

"Well, Chief?"

"Going on all right, sir. It won't be much to look at, but I reckon it'll serve."

"That's all we want." The Captain turned to the engineer officer. "Any other troubles down here?"

"I'm a bit worried about the port engine, sir. That torpedo was a big shock. It may have knocked the shaft out."

"It doesn't matter if we only have one screw. We couldn't go more than a few knots anyway, with that bulkhead."

"That's what I thought, sir."

The Chief E.R.A., presuming on their peace-time friendship in a way which the Captain had anticipated, and did not mind, said:

"Do you think we'll be able to steam, sir?"

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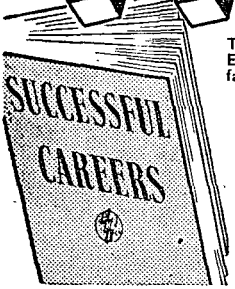

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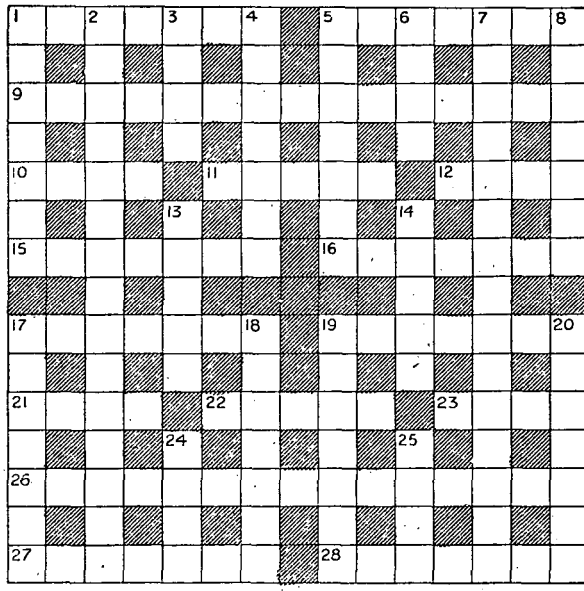

CLUES

Across

1 The sort of air to give one support (7).

5 An injunction to universal benevolence which means nothing on the tennis court (4, 3).

9 Rise rapidly to meet the ball from his cue (9, 6).

10 Watercolour (4).

11 Without us the Roman historian remains unmentioned (5).

12 Man around zero makes a protest (4).

15 Very little need be added to this figure to give it height (7).

16 A sparkle which arises mainly from rubbish (7).

17 This passage sounds like a former treatise (7).

19 Such trimmings would seem to have a southerly aspect (7).

21 It's radically different when it's square (4).

22 This pool is big enough to be a port (5).

23 A solo turn in Scandinavia (4).

26 Lost horizon ? (3, 4, 2, 6).

27 One of Cæsar's enemies is at the head of the torrent (7).

28 His life is a series of ups and downs (7).

Down

1 Painted by Millais in an effervescent mood ? (7).

2 A very close simile (2, 4, 2, 3, 4).

3 The Egyptian goddess has moved to a watery home at Oxford (4).

4 A Teuton needs a small addition to become relevant (7).

5 A sting in the tail of fifty leaves a permanent mark (7).

6 Farewell—to the depression ? (4).

7 Indication that the vintage is unimportant in time of stress ? (3, 4, 2, 1, 5).

8 A conjunction in a steamer produces a maker of spurs (7).

13 Educability involves this title (5).

14 A little bird, though bigger than his tail (5).

17 *Eric surrounds a rodent* in a most peculiar way (7).

18 A slight deception starts a little stream (7).

19 An irritated state that might well describe decorated woodwork—or result from looking at it ! (7).

20 " We've the stones of —And the lamps of heaven " (Charles Kingsley) (7).

24 The marble head turns up in a lake without its flower (4).

25 This hood belongs to all of us (4).

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